LIBERATING LEARNING AND EMPOWERING EDUCATION: INCORPORATING DRAMA AS A SUBJECT IN SINGAPORE SCHOOLS

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KEYWORDS

The following is a list of keywords that appear within the thesis or are associated with the thesis topic. These keywords have been listed for cataloguing purposes. Keywords that apply to this study are: aesthetic, education, drama in education, drama, critical pedagogy, constructivism, Socratic education, holistic education, creativity, multiple intelligences, personal development, Queensland, and Singapore.

ABSTRACT

This study can be divided into two main but related sections. The first involves examining the role of an aesthetic education in schools, and the second, how to make it a reality in Singapore schools. There is currently little tangible support for aesthetic learning in Singapore schools, and research in this area is lacking. However, the findings of this study propose that an aesthetic education should be provided for all students in Singapore schools. The study investigates the role an education in all the arts can play. Furthermore, the philosophies of aesthetic learning resonate with current learning theories and directions in education, such as developing students' multiple intelligences, creativity, and life-skills development. They also relate to constructivist and critical pedagogies; paradigms which infuse the study. The implementation of aesthetic learning in schools involves looking at the different dimensions to schooling: the Intentional, Structural, Curricular, Pedagogical and Evaluative. These investigations occurred in both Singapore and Brisbane (Queensland, Australia) settings where significant practice was observed in the latter. The fieldwork research together with the literature reviewed was used to inform recommendations for drama in education in Singapore.

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The work contained in this thesis has not been previously submitted for a degree or diploma at any other higher education institution. To the best of my knowledge and belief, the thesis contains no material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made.

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1

INTRODUCTION

This study, *Librating Learning and Empowering Education: Incorporating Drama As A Subject In Singapore Schools* was conducted in response to the lack of drama learning in schools in Singapore. Its aim is to convince policy makers, educators, parents and students of the important role drama, and the arts play in learning, and the education of the body, heart and mind. The recent shifts in education policy in Singapore and other countries, and the renewed interest in learning and the role of education in societies has also lent fuel for this study, making it timely. Moreover, these philosophical shifts in education favor the arts and it is therefore urgent that the latter is heard and considered seriously by those who can make a difference.

Interest in studying the area of drama in education in Singapore arose from being involved in education work with a theatre company. The belief that arts in education has the power to 'liberate' learning such that it becomes a joy and passion, and 'empowers' education to become interesting, meaningful and transformative was witnessed first-hand, and consequently deepened through the process of this study. Simultaneously, the difficulties in conducting drama in education programs in schools that received little philosophical and tangible support from the majority of the school community was a constant reality. As well, there was a lack of significant arts education models in Singapore to learn, or adapt from. Dialogue on the topic at both national, and industry levels was also scarce.

As a result, the research for this study involved examining and formulating arguments for arts education in schools, specifically, to incorporate the arts as subjects within the curriculum. It was also interested in looking at what factors needed to be present to facilitate the provision of arts education in schools; in this case, drama as a subject. The fieldwork for the study concentrated on the latter and involved re-examining experiences in Singapore, as well as studying significant practices in Brisbane, Queensland, Australia.

This thesis will continue with a Literature Review, followed by reporting on the methodology adopted for the study. Findings from the fieldwork are presented in chapters five and six; with a chapter each devoted to Australia and Singapore. Finally, the thesis will end with recommendations for the positive growth of drama in education in Singapore.

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LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter focuses on the literature reviewed for defining the hypothesis of this study. It has its premise in the existing political, economic, social, and cultural driving forces in Singapore and their impact on education. The literature review aims to demonstrate that recent directions in education in Singapore while relevant to the needs of the country, are nevertheless, inadequate; therefore questioning the success of present ideologies and policies in achieving stated aims.

This study identifies an integral component of education that is absent in the learning experiences of young Singaporeans. It proposes that schools which fail to provide a Socratic education for their students are depriving them of a crucial, and imperative strategy of meaning making and expression. A Socratic education consists of three components: a critical pedagogy; a constructivist orientation towards learning; and an aesthetic education. Furthermore, learning aesthetically contributes towards the development of multiple intelligences, creativity, and students' personal development in the form of social and cognitive competencies. Each of these extensions to aesthetic learning is further discussed separately.

Finally, this chapter exemplifies the role of a Socratic education in Singapore, and its possible contribution towards achieving national goals.

New Singapore

Singapore is a small country of 659.9 square meters, with a large population of about four million people. Despite its size geographically, the country has big ambitions, with people as its only natural resource.

> In Singapore's case, the common purpose is the Darwinian struggle for national economic competitiveness. Institutions and polices are judged on their contribution to the chosen national enterprise.
>
> (George, 2000: 18)

Singapore's ambitions are economic-based, and economic success forms the ethos of most Singaporeans[1]. This unifying drive is mostly initiated, harnessed and encouraged by the government who often heightens the equation between economic success and survival. This was again demonstrated in the Prime Minister's 2001 National Day address to the nation where he called for '**A New Singapore**' which requires 'a new economic strategy' (Goh, 2001, http://sg.cna.mediacorpnews.com/ndp2001/rally_en5.htm). This strategy involves staying competitive in the global market 'built on advances in science and technology', and driven by a knowledge-based economy 'where human capital is the key source of growth' (ibid). Information and ideas will be the main currency in the new economy. Additionally, Singapore aims to be **a globapolis** where people from 'all over the world' can be found working and living in the country, and who are in turn 'well connected to all parts of the globe' (ibid). This would be through communications, market access and investments, and in areas such

[1] As a young nation that only gained independence in 1965, it has already reached developed nation status. The World Economic Forum's Global Competitiveness Ranking had Singapore recently ranked as the world's most competitive economy (Ministry of Information and the Arts, 2001: 10).

as education, sports and the arts. The government aims for New Singapore to be 'one of the world's finest, most livable cities' (ibid).

Simultaneously, the government realizes that economic success alone while imperative, is insufficient to sustain Singaporeans. It realizes that creating a citizen requires providing for the multi-facetedness of human needs, and allowing Singaporeans to feel ownership over their experiences. The need to instill a personal commitment to Singapore has become more salient in the 21st century now that borders between countries are more fluid, and human talent is not constrained by geography but obeys market forces. Consequently, this has led to the government creating a 'social compact' with its citizens, termed '**Singapore 21**'[2].

> Singapore 21 is a total vision. It reaches beyond economic and material achievements to hearts and people. It examines values, attitudes, roles and relationships in society. These values bind us together and distinguish us from others as Singaporeans.
>
> (Goh,1999, www.singapore21.org/speeches_240499.html)

The five key ideas that form the Singapore 21 vision can be found at Appendix B: 1.

One of the areas identified for development to assist Singapore in becoming a globapolis is the arts. The Ministry of Information and the Arts developed ***The Renaissance City*** report (2000) to capture the ideology of the globapolis that Singapore wants to become, and the spirit of the new economy. It also acknowledges

[2] Singapore 21 was a consultative effort by the government to understand how Singaporeans thought and felt about being Singaporean, and how he/she envisioned Singapore's future. The resulting social compact is a reflection of these voices, and aims to assure Singaporeans that their future is being catered for. It also hopes to instill a loyalty in Singaporeans to the country and to encourage them to be active citizens who contribute to the success of Singapore.

the role the arts can play in nation building, and achieving Singapore's social compact. The report states:

> By calling for a Renaissance Singapore, this is not an attempt to replicate the conditions of post-medieval Europe. Rather, it is the spirit of creativity, innovation, multi-disciplinary learning, socio-economic and cultural vibrancy that we are trying to capture. The vision is a projection of the type of Singapore person, society and nation that we can aspire to.
>
> (MITA, 2000, http://www.mita.gov.sg/renaissance/htm)

The Renaissance City envisions Singapore as a 'global city for the arts'. It will be the meeting place of culture from all over the world, and aims to reach a level of development comparable to cities like Hong Kong, Glasgow and Melbourne in 5 – 10 years. The report sees Singapore becoming the 'gateway to Asia' whereby it will showcase the arts in Asia to the rest of the world, and vice versa. While the report acknowledges the intrinsic benefits of the arts, 'the encouragement of a keen aesthetic sense among Singaporeans and the improvement in the standard of our arts will benefit us and society'[3], the emphasis seems to be on the economic benefits of becoming a Renaissance City. It highlights the importance of creativity in the new economy and how the arts can be 'a dynamic means of facilitating creative abilities'[4]. These creative abilities and the arts further combine to create new products of value to consumers. The report also recognizes that the arts is a business sector in its own right and has a significant impact on the economy. Furthermore, the arts contribute to the image and attractiveness of Singapore, benefiting tourism. It also encourages investments and attracts foreign talent to the country.

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[3] Chapter Four, *Introduction*, pt. 1.
[4] Chapter Four, *Creativity in the Future Economy*, pt. 13.

The government recognizes that for New Singapore to succeed, the necessary skills, values and attitudes it embodies need to be instilled in young Singaporeans – the future of the nation.

Education in Singapore

Education is a top priority in Singapore, with a significant amount of resources being spent on creating a high quality education system[5]. Singaporean students are known to be internationally robust in the areas of mathematics and science, attaining high standards in international rankings and competitions. However, the government recognized that excelling in the math and sciences was insufficient for the new economy, with education in Singapore making shifts in recent years to take into account global changes. The former Senior Minister of State for Education, Dr. Aline Wong stated:

> Singapore's success in the 21st century depends on the ability of the education system to equip our young with the skills, values and mindsets to cope with an uncertain future.
>
> (Ministry of Education, 2000: 61)

This desire to equip young Singaporeans with the appropriate 'skills, values and mindsets' has been translated into a Mission and Vision for the Ministry of Education. Its mission is 'Moulding the Future of our Nation' (ibid: 6), where people are placed at

[5] In 2001, the government committed to increasing expenditure on education from 3.6% of the country's GDP to 4.5% or about $1.5 billion more each year. Singapore was ranked third out of forty-nine developed and developing countries on whether its educational system 'meets the needs of a competitive

the center of this future. Its vision is 'Thinking Schools, Learning Nation' (ibid: 7), which takes into account the importance of developing innovative ideas, and creating new knowledge in the new economy. Skills such as **creativity** and **critical thinking** are prized, and schools are to encourage a love for learning in students. This will ensure that the workforce and economy has a constant supply of resources. However, it is also at a young age that Singapore's social compact needs to be instilled and this responsibility falls upon the shoulders of education. The yearbook of the Ministry of Education states that 'while nurturing the capabilities of our youth to be global players, the challenge is also to develop them as responsible members of the community and loyal citizens of Singapore' (ibid: 9). The key ideas from the Singapore 21 vision are woven into the Ministry's vision.

The over-riding paradigm that resulted from the Ministry of Education's mission and vision is to provide an 'ability-driven education' system. This lies in the belief that 'every child matters, and has a valuable contribution to make to society and his country' (Ministry of Education, 2000: 10). It places an emphasis on the identification and development of the individual abilities and talents that exist in every student, in order to help them 'excel in different ways' (ibid). The curriculum for an ability-driven education involves the mastery of core skills and values that are practiced through curricular and co-curricular activities[6].

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economy', by the 2001 World Competitiveness Report (Goh, 2001, http://www1.moe.edu.sg/tdr2001/speeches/spe.htm).

[6] The eight core skills and values are: literacy and numeracy skills, information skills, thinking skills and creativity, communication skills, knowledge application skills, social and cooperative skills, self-management skills, and character development.

Evaluating the success of an ability-driven education involves translating aims into desired outcomes. The Ministry of Education developed the 'Desired Outcomes of Education' (MOE, 2000, http:// www1.moe.edu.sg/ desired.htm) to exemplify what teachers and students should strive for at the different stages in education. There are altogether four levels of outcomes: Primary, Secondary, Junior College, and Post-secondary and Tertiary[7]. Together, they encompass the mission and vision of education in Singapore, with their premise of providing each student a **holistic education**. This involves 'developing the child morally, intellectually, physically, socially and aesthetically' (ibid). However, in reality, emphasis on the different areas is unequal, with the focus sharpest on intellectual development, and the least on aesthetic development.

Arts Education in Singapore

The arts have always played a minimal role in the Singapore education system. This is because they were, and are still largely viewed as 'soft, irrational, and incidental to our needs as logical, rational beings'; as recently admitted by an ex-Senior Minister of State (Wong, 2001, http://www.gov.sg/sgip/announce/070801aw.htm). Therefore, amongst the art forms, only art and music are offered as subjects within the school curriculum. Although they are compulsory subjects between the ages of seven to fourteen, students have a minimal exposure to these subjects as compared to the rest of the 'cognitive' subjects. Furthermore, opportunities for students interested in

[7] These outcomes are listed in detail in Appendix B: 2.

specializing in these art forms vary[8], and in the case of music, students need to excel at their academic subjects before they are allowed to elect it as an examinable subject.

Students who are interested in pursuing art and music without specializing in them as subjects usually participate in co-curricular activities organized by the school. These take the form of clubs and are limited to the number of vacancies available. Art forms such as drama or dance may be pursued in a similar fashion, if offered by the school. Other forms of exposure to the various art forms are through performances staged by external artists at the school, termed assembly plays after the school period they occupy, or by bringing students out to watch performances or view an exhibition.

In recent years, some schools have introduced enrichment programs for students using the arts[9]. This was mostly in response to the Ministry of Education's call to provide a holistic education for students and to diffuse the emphasis on intellectual development found in the curriculum. However, it was left to individual schools to decide on the importance of providing these programs for their students. As a result, aesthetic development in Singapore schools to date has always been inconsistent and mostly neglected.

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[8] Only a handful of schools in Singapore offer opportunities to specialize in music as an examinable GCSE 'O' and 'A' level subject. This is because there is a lack of qualified music teachers. Teachers who are qualified are usually posted to schools with a higher than average academic standard where interested students have to firstly qualify for admission to these schools.

[9] Enrichment programs are either conducted during curriculum time or after-school hours. They are usually compulsory, and vary in length between a term of about 8 weeks to a year of about 30 weeks. The programs are conducted by either teachers or artists-in-residence, and may differ in type for various cohorts of students.

Some Challenges Faced

The Ministry of Education's vision for education in Singapore faces some challenges if they are to achieve goals previously outlined. Two of these challenges will be highlighted in this study – producing thinking and creative students, and providing an aesthetic education.

Critical Thinking and Creativity

Students in Singapore have generally high academic standards. However, recent studies have shown them to be 'merely "exam-smart" but lacking in depth and capability for critical and independent thinking' (Ong, 1999: 101). Singaporean students are mostly not known to be creative or creators of new knowledge. The local newspaper, *The Straits Times* reports that comparative education expert, Andy Green while visiting Singapore commented that it was difficult for students here to be creative as the larger system also required them to be conformists ('Creativity, system pulls in two directions', 2001, http://www.straitstimes.asia1.com.sg/singapore/story/ 0,18/0,3/ 6/6,00.html). He noted that creative thinking in Singapore schools was less about 'stimulating the imagination and originality' but more about 'advanced problem-solving techniques' (ibid).

It is agreed that the political climate in Singapore where social conformity, and a non-questioning attitude is encouraged impacts upon the learning climate in the classroom. Teachers are afraid of tackling difficult issues and therefore spoon-feed students with

knowledge from curriculum that has been provided by the state. Critical thinking has mostly been absent from learning experiences, where education has involved the unidirectional flow of knowledge from teacher to student. In a study conducted on two thousand seven hundred and nineteen adolescents in Singapore, researchers found that most were only concerned with taking notes in the classroom, with only half of them making attempts to understand the teacher. Moreover, less than 10% of the adolescents interviewed reported that they were engaged in more 'complex higher-order thinking processes such as applying, hypothesizing and wondering what might happen, analyzing or evaluating the lesson' (Tay-Koay, 1999: 80 - 81).

These challenges to critical thinking and creativity have been recognized by the government, and the Ministry of Education has called for a new type of teacher, who will no longer be a gate-keeper of knowledge, but instead a 'facilitator of knowledge' (Ministry of Education, 2000: 42). Teachers need to inculcate a love for learning in their students, and encourage them to be critical thinkers in order to construct new knowledge. Thus, new methodologies for teaching are required to produce thinking and creative students. However, the process will be challenging even when endorsed by the government. Although the political climate in Singapore is more embracing of dissenting views, it will not contribute enough to lessening this challenge. A change in mindset and ingrained practices is required. These take time and courage.

An Aesthetic Education

The Ministry of Education's *Desired Outcomes of Education* aims to provide a holistic education for students. The document states that all students at the end of their secondary education should 'have an appreciation for aesthetics' (MOE, 2000, http://www1.moe. edu.sg/desired.htm). However, there seems to be a lack of concerted effort in providing such experiences for students, as outlined earlier. Furthermore, it seems that arguments used for developing students aesthetically are largely economically based, linking creativity with the arts; a trait required for the new economy, or producing future consumers of artistic products, as seen in *The Renaissance City* report. There is a lack of understanding of an aesthetic education.

Judging from the arts curriculum in schools, only art and music are recognized as legitimate forms of artistic study. Furthermore, until recently, they emphasized mimetic techniques more than creative expression. Even though these art forms are offered in the curriculum, the lack of intensity in exposure to these subjects, and continuity over time make their learning outcomes questionable. Moreover, by determining that only students with good academic grades are allowed to specialize in music signals to students that these artistic disciplines are not equal in importance to traditional 'cognitive-based' subjects. It also fails to take into consideration that students have different abilities and talents, and may not be able to excel in traditional academic subjects. Additionally, the lack of trained music teachers is symptomatic of the wider problem where there is a lack of recognition of the arts as legitimate forms of study or as a vocation, and a lack of opportunities to specialize in music from a young age.

Although students may pursue their interest in the arts through co-curricular activities, these clubs have a limited enrolment, and are conducted after-school hours and therefore of a limited duration. As a result, aesthetic learning in these circumstances is handicapped. Exposure to performances within or external to the school also contribute little to aesthetic education, especially when students have no opportunity to learn about, or participate in these experiences themselves, such as drama or dance. Moreover, assembly performances last no longer than thirty-five minutes in duration, and excursions to the theatre or gallery are scarce.

Even though schools have recently sought opportunities for their students to experience the arts through enrichment programs, they are in the minority. Furthermore, these programs are usually limited to a certain group of students within the school, over a relatively short period of time. This limits the ability to scope and sequence learning, and continuity is an issue. These constraints restrict the outcomes from learning aesthetically. Additionally, the real aims of most enrichment programs are seldom aesthetic based but more personal development inclined, such as instilling confidence in students. Therefore, learning takes place *through*, versus *in* the arts.

To summarize, the arts are still not wholly appreciated for their intrinsic worth in the education system in Singapore, and are viewed as less important than traditional academic subjects. Reviewing the current situation for arts education in Singapore reveals that although the education climate presently is more receptive towards aesthetic learning, radical changes providing students with an aesthetic education are

unlikely to occur. This is unfortunate when considered in light of *The Renaissance City* report as it is uncertain where the producers and consumers of this global city for the arts will emerge from given the shallow experiences provided for young Singaporeans. It is further unsettling to acknowledge that students in Singapore are deprived of an integral form of learning and knowing.

Envisioning a Better Way: A Socratic Education

Socratic learning is:

> to reaffirm that education should be primarily concerned with critical reflection, with personal development and with the sustained enquiry into the various forms of meaning. ... They involve **the body, the feelings, the mind and the imagination** (emphasis mine). ... However they are classified, these different activities are *primary forms of understanding*; they need to be generically and equally included in the good curriculum.
>
> (Abbs, 1994: 8)

A strategy to approach the challenges outlined above is to provide students with a Socratic education. A Socratic education views learning as a life-long process that requires students to be critical thinkers and active learners. Knowledge is not transferred but made. Moreover, a Socratic education acknowledges the importance of learning that extends beyond the cognitive to include the bodily and sensory. Its holistic approach to education prizes the role of aesthetic learning and treats it as imperative.

A Socratic education may be examined in more detail by discussing two main components: a critical and constructivist pedagogy, and aesthetic learning.

A Critical and Constructivist Pedagogy

> For Singapore to develop future generations of thinking and committed citizens, schools should be crucibles for questioning and learning.
>
> (Ministry of Education, 2000: 30)

Socratic students are required to be critical thinkers, and their teachers need to encourage a questioning disposition towards learning. Additionally, teachers need to teach students how to learn and construct knowledge in order to generate an interest in life-long learning, and for creativity to occur.

Critical theorists point out however, that critical thinking means more than just 'thinking skills' which is a neutralization of the term, 'critical' by 'removing its political and cultural dimensions' and instead 'laundering its analytic potency' (McLaren, 1989: 161). Therefore, being critical means thinking about the 'social function of particular forms of knowledge' and not just about knowledge itself (ibid). This requires teachers and students to address structures that exist politically, economically and socially in society, and not shy away from these potentially difficult, and personal issues. Moreover, it is through addressing these issues that schools are able to produce 'committed citizens', and strengthen Singapore's social compact as students become 'committed to self and social empowerment' (ibid: 183).

Aside from being critical and deconstructing existing knowledge and structures, new understandings or knowledge needs to be constructed. Constructivism refers to the process of change or knowledge construction that occurs in one's thinking as learning occurs. Therefore, knowledge is a process, and is made. It is not static or unchanging,

and requires an active engagement on the part of the learner (Waite-Stupiansky, 1997: 2). Moreover, constructivists believe that 'fostering appreciation for a multiplicity of truths and options is the "real" mission of education because "real" problems are rarely unidimensional' (Brooks, 1993: 111). Adopting such a stance enables students to be questioning, and encourages them to be creative and not passive recipients of knowledge that is incontestable. It also means that teachers are no longer the gate-keepers of knowledge but become facilitators of knowledge. Furthermore, planning for student learning should take into account student abilities and pre-existing knowledge to ensure that learning experiences are relevant, and students are engaged in their own learning (ibid: 24). This contributes towards providing an ability-driven education.

Apart from being critical thinkers and constructivists, Socratic learners need to harness their bodies, feelings and imagination in the learning process. This is fulfilled by providing an aesthetic education. Moreover, learning aesthetically also engages the cognitive; a misconception of the arts in education that has led to its secondary status in schools.

Aesthetic Learning

> .... (the) aesthetic denotes a mode of sensuous knowing essential for life and development of consciousness; aesthetic response is inevitably through its sensory and physical operations, cognitive in nature. .... all aesthetic activity as it is developed through the manifold forms of the arts is simultaneously perceptive, affective and **cognitive**; it can offer an education, therefore of the highest order not through the analytical intellect but through the engaged sensibility.
>
> (Abbs, 1987: 53 - 55)

Learning aesthetically involves the senses and works through the mind. It requires perception, feelings and cognition, and is a form of knowledge in itself. This contradicts the myth that the arts are 'soft' and 'feeling' subjects that do not require the mind and are therefore less valid in the educative process. Dewey (1934: 22) defines our senses as the 'meaning of things present in immediate experience' and it cannot be opposed to the mind as it is 'the means by which participation is rendered fruitful through sense'. Therefore, the mind is the organ through which we make meaning through our senses. However, education in the modern and post-modern age has largely forgotten that we perceive through our senses first, and that we are sensory beings. This has led to the divorce of the mind from the senses, and learning experiences are relegated solely to the confines of the cognitive.

Another reason for the diminishing of aesthetic learning in schools can be attributed to the functionalism of modern societies, or what Abbs calls 'the fallacy of Cato' (Abbs, 1994: 7). This fallacy involves the belief that every human activity has a function or practicality, and 'the vast range of human experience and potentiality is subjected to one question: *what use is it?*' (ibid: 7). This mode of thinking still exists in societies today and in education systems. It is evident in the economic drive found in many countries. However, education should be concerned with more than just training, or the acquisition of skills and knowledge for vocational means but should lead to 'a certain mode of consciousness, a delicate, sustained, reflective disposition towards experience, an openness towards potential truth and possible meaning' (ibid: 15). Societies that aim to educate should view learning as a personal development process that exceeds

economic purposes. It should embody the multi-facetedness of life itself that consists of experiences that involve the body, mind and feelings.

Aesthetic learning involves providing students with an arts education. Moreover, it should encompass all forms of art, and not just art and music, the two most common forms of arts subjects taught in schools. This is because 'the expressive disciplines are centrally preoccupied with the sensuous embodiment of representative meaning' and together, form 'an epistemic community' (Abbs, 1989: 210). Each art form, commonly recognized as literature, drama, dance, music, film and art, is different from the other, with forms and processes that contribute uniquely to aesthetic learning, and meaning making. Students should therefore have opportunities to learn all the artistic languages as well as opportunities for specialization. It is vital that schools view the arts as a generic community of subjects, each with potential to provide doorways to making, and understanding experience.

An education in the aesthetic involves learning about the histories, traditional forms and existing works of the various art forms. Students of the aesthetic are called to be 'cultural ecologists' (Abbs, 1987: 4) and learn the languages of the artistic disciplines. This involves interacting with mediums and materials that carry with them 'a history, a repertoire of uses, of working conventions, of established connections and meanings, both overt and hidden' (ibid: 57), ensuring that students are equipped with sufficient knowledge and skills in order to understand, as well as generate new forms of knowing. The 'conservationist aesthetic' (ibid: 4) provides for students to learn from the past to inform the future, allowing innovation to occur.

However, besides being conservationists, aesthetic learners embrace 'symbolic creativity'. Willis states that this is because 'being human – human be-ing-ness – means to be creative in the sense of remaking the world for ourselves as we make and find our own place and identity' (Willis, 1990: 11). Furthermore, it is necessary as we are essentially 'communicating and producing beings' (ibid: 10). This involves an interaction between knowledge and skills learnt as 'cultural ecologists', as well as personal experiences and interactions from daily life, what he terms as the 'grounded aesthetic'. The 'grounded aesthetic' acknowledges that our daily lives are 'full of expressions, signs and symbols' through which we 'seek creatively to establish their presence, identity and meaning' (ibid: 1). Examples can be found in corporate culture such as 'yuppie' culture, and music and dance culture such as the punk and techno movements. The grounded aesthetic is 'the yeast of common culture' (ibid: 23). Therefore, to learn aesthetically is also to involve, and include experiences from daily life. This ensures that meaning making is relevant and reflects, as well as extends experience. Through engaging with the grounded aesthetic, we connect with ourselves and with others, contributing back to our communal culture.

What does the process of aesthetic learning look like? Aesthetic learning takes place within an aesthetic field; a process of four stages that Abbs likens to a 'web of energy' that feeds upon itself:

> .... (it) implies an intricate web of energy where the parts are seen in relationship, in a state of reciprocal flow between tradition and innovation, between form and impulse, between the society and the individual, between the four phases of *making, presenting, responding and evaluating* which mark the four essential elements of the aesthetic field.
>
> (Abbs, 1987: 55)

The aesthetic field accounts for both the conservationist and grounded aesthetic. It also reminds us of the larger role an aesthetic education has in society, where through 'symbolic creativity', a relationship is formed between the individual and society. The four phases[10] of the aesthetic field provides a practical model for learning through the body, mind and senses that can be translated into the classroom.

What are some of the outcomes of learning aesthetically? Besides re-dressing the balance between our cognitive and affective lives resulting in a more holistic education, and equipping young people with an alternative 'language' for understanding and meaning making, learning aesthetically also contributes towards intelligence, creativity and one's personal development.

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[10] The *making* phase of the field requires students to be learnt in the discipline of the art form and together with his/her grounded aesthetic to put together, or form a piece of work (Abbs 1987: 57 – 58). This work requires *presenting* to an audience; private or public as a work 'exists in its action on the senses and imagination of the audience. No audience – no aesthetic' (ibid: 58).

The third phase in the field occurs as the audience is *responding* to a piece of work. Responses are often intuitive and sensory; involving the affect, and is, according to Abbs, to be encouraged. This is to nurture 'trust in the authority of the aesthetic form' and 'to cultivate the aesthetic response before works of art; not the political or historical or conceptual' (ibid: 60). This acknowledges the primacy of the senses and affect as humans, and learning to trust them as forms of knowledge.

Finally, understanding our responses and making meaning from them involves *evaluating* them. It requires us to 'organize the complex elements of our aesthetic response' and 'to formulate the aesthetic response conceptually' (ibid: 61). This activity requires cognition. Evaluation completes the aesthetic field and draws art back into the community, 'into the imagination and sensibility of human experience' (ibid: 59). This contribution to the identity and evolution of society, and the art form further provides continuing impetus for the aesthetic field.

Extending Aesthetic Learning

Many arguments have been touted in getting education systems to provide, and sustain meaningful arts education programs in schools. These arguments have drawn from the fields of cognitive research to social development studies. The literature reviewed for this study examined three schools of thought that are relevant to the aims of education today, and hopes to reinforce the importance of aesthetic learning in schools. They are: the theory of multiple intelligences, creativity, and the contribution of the arts to one's personal development.

Multiple Intelligences

The theory of multiple intelligences by Howard Gardner emerged in the 1980s and has since amassed a huge following in education. A psychologist, and now an educationist, his theories have been used by arts educators to advocate for a strong place for aesthetic learning in any curriculum. The theory of multiple intelligences demonstrates that there is more than one type of intelligence, and intelligence is not limited to the cognitive. It also reinforces the benefits of learning aesthetically where learners can be found to be engaging, and developing the majority of intelligences.

Gardner (1983: x) defines intelligence as 'the ability to solve problems, or to create products, that are valued within one or more cultural settings'. Intelligence is recognized as a value construct that is determined by societies, and may be viewed differently in each society. It is therefore not a monolithic construct. Gardner also

found that studies in intelligence traditionally focused on logical-mathematical and linguistic measurements that were biased when considered against the range of human potential (ibid: xvi). His research thus sought to find what other types of intelligences existed, and therefore ought to be pursued and developed in order for people to realize, and harness their full potential.

Gardner identified eight types of intelligences and continued research seeks to discover the presence of more. They are: linguistic; logical-mathematical; spatial; musical; bodily-kinaesthetic; interpersonal; intrapersonal; and naturalist intelligence[11] (Campbell, 1999: xvi). Every individual should be able to develop all eight intelligences albeit to varying degrees of prowess, and most likely excelling in only one or two intelligences.

The implications of this theory for education lie in providing students with a broad spectrum of learning experiences. It means recognizing that intelligence extends beyond subjects that prize linguistic and logical-mathematical development, and curriculum should also develop the other six intelligences. To deprive learners of this opportunity would be to prevent them from realizing and fulfilling their full potential. Moreover, students who do not excel at the traditional intelligences may avoid suffering from a low self-esteem and personal failure as they prove to be intelligent in other equally important areas. Gardner (1993: 9) states that people who develop 'their particular spectrum of intelligences' engage a 'biopsychological potential' (ibid: 36) where they feel 'more engaged and competent, and therefore more inclined to serve the

[11] The definition of each of these intelligences may be found at Appendix B: 3.

society in a constructive way'. Developing students' multiple intelligences also contributes to achieving an ability-driven education where differing abilities in students are identified and harnessed.

Apart from developing one's naturalist intelligence, it is difficult to deny that learning in the arts contributes towards developing the other seven intelligences; from putting artistic forms and conventions to practice, to putting together a production; and as learning takes place within the aesthetic field. Moreover, no other subject possesses the unique ability of the artistic disciplines to develop the majority of intelligences simultaneously, reinforcing the role of aesthetic learning in education.

Creativity

> In the knowledge age, our successes depend on our ability to absorb, process and synthesize knowledge through constant value innovation. Creativity will move into the center of our economic life because it is a critical component of a nation's ability to remain competitive.
>
> (MITA, 2000, http://www.mita.gov.sg/renaissance/htm)

Creativity is a buzzword in developed economies internationally as countries prepare for a knowledge-based, innovation-driven economic market. Creative individuals will be the driving force of the workplace in the 21st century and societies are focusing their resources on developing, and harnessing creativity. The above quotation taken from *The Renaissance City* in Singapore reflects the voice of the larger creativity movement found globally.

Although creativity is not a new concept, it is still not understood fully. Ongoing research discounts old interpretations, and continues to throw new light on the topic. Creativity was once thought to only belong to the domain of the arts but has since been found to exist in other disciplines as well. However, the arts are still commonly linked to creativity, and have found new resonance in the new economy, exemplified by the Creative Industries[12]. In the Creative Industries, the arts will have 'a great deal to contribute in terms of offering new value propositions to consumers' (MITA, 2000, http://www.mita.gov.sg/renaissance/htm)[13], reflected in the products marketed and sold.

The increase in interest in creativity, and the introduction of the Creative Industries has led to a review and renewal of arts education in schools[14]. In Singapore, the arts are recognized as vehicles for developing creativity in students, as stated by former Senior Minister of State for Education, Aline Wong. She states that 'innovation, creative thinking, problem-solving skills' are reasons for 'putting a stronger emphasis on the teaching and learning of the arts in our schools' (Wong, 2001, http://www.gov.sg/sgip/announce/070801aw.htm). Consequently, developing creativity is used as a valid argument by arts education advocates for more, and a higher quality of arts education programs in schools, and has led recently to some progress in arts education initiatives by the Ministry of Education.

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[12] These industries involve the artistic disciplines and other forms of culture, such as fashion, photography, etc. in their ability to provide new ideas, or content for industries. It often requires interdisciplinary collaborations, and increasingly the use of technology.

[13] Chapter 4, *Creativity in the Future Economy*, pt. 14.

[14] In the UK, the government has drawn up a policy paper, *Culture and Creativity: The Next Ten Years* (2001), dedicated to the development of the Creative Industries. Education and the arts are essential components of the policy, where new partnerships are being sought between schools, artists/arts organizations and businesses to ensure students are given opportunities to develop their creative potential.

However, the state and status of arts education in Singapore schools presently is insufficient to produce creative individuals who will meet the needs of the Creative Industries. This perhaps stems from a lack of real understanding of creativity, and how it should be encouraged[15].

Research for this study found that the creative process resonates strongly with aesthetic learning. This process involves three thought-processes: 'reflectiveness', 'transformational impulses from the unconscious', and 'changing the world' (Feldman, Csikszentmihakyi & Gardner, 1994: 28 - 38).

'Reflectiveness' is the 'ability to make possible the belief that we can know ourselves, can hold our experiences and the experience of others up for examination' (ibid: 32). This ability is foundational to aesthetic learning and exists in the forming and responding phase of the aesthetic field. It is also the hallmark of a Socratic education where students are required to be critical thinkers. 'Transformational impulses from the unconscious' refers to our ability to 'imagine changes that might actually be brought into existence and placed into the crafted world of human culture' (ibid). This is commonly understood as using our imagination, a process that is highly encouraged in the artistic disciplines in the creation of symbolic products.

[15] The arts have traditionally been associated with creativity perhaps because pieces of work or products are produced regularly in order for judgments to be made. In order to assess creativity, there needs to exist creative products. Moreover, the symbolic and often abstract nature of the arts lends a uniqueness to its products not frequently encountered in common culture. It is this difference or originality that often results in creativity being associated with the arts.

Finally, 'changing the world' is the belief that 'unconscious thought is motivated by a natural desire to transform, to change, to make things different from the way they were' (ibid: 35). Researchers call this a special kind of consciousness involving the realization that one has the power to make the world into a different place. This consciousness is harnessed in the arts as artists form, and present their works to interact with, and communicate with society. This consciousness is the basis of an artist's relationship with his or her audience. It is also harnessed in a constructivist paradigm where knowledge is constantly made and re-made to form new interpretations and knowledge.

Knowing that creative processes exist in all aesthetic learning reinforces the role of an arts education in schools. However, creative processes exist in all types of learning but perhaps is more evidenced in aesthetic learning because it directly engages the imagination and feelings. In *Out of Our Minds*, Robinson (2001: 154) reminds us that creativity involves both the cognitive and affective, as does all conscious and unconscious thought. It also requires intuition, and 'leaps of the imagination'. Learning that stifles our feeling-life and imagination hinders creativity.

What is creativity? Creativity is not solely a cognitive trait residing within an individual. It involves the affect, and needs to be developed and allowed to emerge. Moreover, it is culturally dependent and requires the co-operation of other people in order to be validated. Like intelligence, one is only creative if a society or culture deems it so. Furthermore, what is creative in one culture might not be regarded alike in another.

Gardner defines creativity as:

> ... creativity should not be thought of as inhering principally in the brain, the mind, or the personality of a single individual. Rather, creativity should be thought of as emerging from the interactions of three nodes: the individual with his or her own profile of competencies and values; the domains available for study and mastery within a culture; and the judgments rendered by the field that is deemed competent within a culture.
>
> (Gardner, 1983: xvii)

Feldman, Csikszentmihaly and Gardner (1994: 20 – 23) explain creativity using the concept of the 'Domain Individual Field Interaction', also known as 'The Locus of Creativity'[16]. In this model, creativity is an interaction between an individual, his or her area of study/involvement, and the amount of support or co-operation provided for the individual.

This theory on creativity when transposed onto the relationship between education and creativity has important implications. It questions the view that only some individuals are born creative, or that creativity is a trait that can be nurtured and applied across the board. Instead, creativity requires focused areas of study, and is a subjective endeavor. These researchers further state that mastery of a domain is required in order for creativity to occur in that particular domain. This also acknowledges that creative endeavors only occur after a sufficient amount of learning in a domain. Like the theory of multiple intelligences, it is rare for one to be creative in more than two domains

[16] A domain is defined as 'the structure and organization of a body of knowledge evolved to contain and express certain distinct forms of information', and can be understood as areas of study, or subjects in education (Feldman, Csikszentmihaly & Gardner, 2000: 16). The field is 'the social and cultural aspects' that impact upon a domain; intangible as well as tangible (ibid: 22). It encompasses the domain 'with sources of support, instruction, socialization, tradition, evaluation, and recognition'. Moreover, the existence of 'a well-organized and subtly structured field is a good indicator that creative activity has been valued in a domain for a long time' (ibid: 36).

(ibid: 23). Students should therefore be allowed opportunities to identify which domains they have an interest, and affinity for, and further allowed to specialize in them to encourage creativity. This move supports an ability-driven education. Consequently, opportunities for students to experience in-depth and continuous aesthetic learning is necessary if the arts are expected to foster creativity.

Additionally, when considering creativity in the arts, the 'field' plays an important role as well. The amount of support arts education receives, both in terms of physical resources, and human expertise impacts upon interpretations of creativity. Artistic disciplines that suffer from a lack of learning time, space, materials etc. will have more difficulty producing creative students. Additionally, teachers who are not trained in the arts, or where there is a lack of a coherent arts education program, creativity will fail to prosper. This scenario arises because creativity requires forming judgments or making evaluations on a product or piece of work. Only those experienced in an art form will be able to make informed judgments, and only when a well-established arts program exists will students receive consistent, and clear evaluations on their work.

The highly subjective nature of creativity, and its dependency on external factors in order for it to originate have led Gardner, Feldman and Csikszentmihaly to rephrase the question on creativity from 'what is creativity?' to 'where is creativity?'. This shift in interpretation signals to schools that they have a large role to play in ensuring creativity is developed. Schools need to provide opportunities for students to identify, and develop themselves in domains in which they can excel, and create an appropriate environment for creativity to flourish.

Personal Development

Aside from using arguments on creativity to promote arts education in schools, arts educators have also promoted the benefits of learning in the arts towards students' personal development. It is often said that the arts contribute toward developing confidence, expression, teamwork, amongst other skills and attributes. A report developed by the Arts Education Partnership and The President's Committee on the Arts and Humanities in the US, *The Champions of Change* (1999), consisted of several studies investigating the benefits of aesthetic learning.

The studies in *The Champions of Change* involved studying arts education programs in schools as well as arts organizations, and encompassed several art forms. Studies which focused on arts education in schools found that students involved with the arts had better language skills, were more creative, and were viewed as generally more competent than their peers. They also had a better self-concept, and were better adjusted to face the work force and deal with life's situations and experiences. Other traits observed in this group of students were a higher level of tolerance and empathy towards others. This was attributed to the 'potential opportunities to interact with students to whom one might not gravitate in the ordinary course of school life, including students from other economic strata and other racial groups' (Catterall, Chapleau & Iwanaga, 1999: 15).

In particular, one of the studies found 'a constellation of capacities' that existed, and resulted from students who learnt aesthetically (Burton, Horowitz & Abeles, 1999: 43).

These researchers found that learning in the arts involved a set of 'cognitive competencies' or 'habits of mind'[17], as well as 'an array of personal dispositions'[18] (ibid). Together, they formed 'constellation of capacities'. The researchers explain these capacities arise in aesthetic learning that includes several art forms over a period of time.

Additionally, they were transferable to other areas of learning that required a similar 'constellation of capacities'. Furthermore, this transference process was not unidirectional but instead dynamic and interactive, where 'the presence of habits of mind that emerge in both arts learning and learning in other subjects consists of a dialectic involving the cumulative effects of participating disciplines' (ibid: 43). Therefore, this study not only demonstrated clearly the wider benefits of an arts education towards the individual development of students, but also its contribution to learning in other subjects. The use of these particular capacities in other learning areas further contributed to their development, strengthening the potential for learning and meaning making.

The studies in *The Champions of Change* clearly show some of the benefits of an arts education. These outcomes however, were only observed in 'high-arts' students, or students who had experienced an education in an art form(s) over a significant duration

[17] These included elaborative and creative thinking, fluency, originality, focused perception, and imagination. They involved 'a rich interweaving of intuitive, practical, and logical forms of thought' which is 'typical of most creative artists, scientists, and thinkers in general' (Burton, Horowitz & Abeles, 1999: 42).

[18] These were defined as risk taking, task persistence, ownership of learning, and perceptions of academic accomplishment in school (ibid).

of time[19]. This could consist of a combination of curricular and co-curricular activities, as well as art forms. Furthermore, studies in the report demonstrated that benefits of learning in the arts are not immediately observable, and only occur after a period of prolonged aesthetic experiences. In the above-mentioned study, the researchers looked at developments for children and adolescents over the period spent between the 8th and 12th grades, and additionally enlisted the National Educational Longitudinal Survey, a panel study which followed more than 25,000 students in American secondary schools for ten years. The researchers found that findings became significant only after a period of time, and incrementally increased with the duration of exposure to arts learning (Catterall, Chapleau & Iwanaga, 1999: 4).

The study conducted by Burton, Horowitz and Abeles (1999: 45) similarly had their findings confirmed in schools 'where young people had pursued several arts over a duration of time'. These two findings that form crucial criteria for reaping the benefits of an aesthetic education reinforces the need for coherent, in-depth and sustained arts education programs in schools. These programs should provide for learning in the various art forms, as well as opportunities for specialization to ensure that the benefits from an aesthetic education are maximized.

[19] An example of a 'high-arts' student would be, 'those who have attended a drama class once per week or more as of 8th grade, participated in a drama club as of 8th grade, taken drama coursework in grade 10, and participated in a school play or musical in grades 10 and 12 – or at least most of the above (Catterall, Chapleau & Iwanaga, 1999: 14).

Implications of A Socratic Education for Singapore

> In an age of cultural and spiritual impoverishment all the institutions of education have no choice but to become cultural centres, critical of their own society. In a muddled and distracted age, an age in which culture has deteriorated into a commodity, they must fashion, as best they can, honest and creative forms of symbolization, forms which promise to heal the division between thought and feeling .... forms which suggest the outlines of a new integration of man.
>
> (Abbs, 1979: 86)

A Socratic education that involves 'the body, the feelings, the mind and the imagination' will prepare young Singaporeans for the 21st century and beyond. It will provide the necessary attitudes, intelligences, skills and values for survival, and success in a globapolis; overcoming the challenges facing education in Singapore outlined earlier.

Research undertaken in the literature review states that an education system that encompasses Socratic learning encourages critical thinking amongst its students, equipping them with the necessary skills to question and investigate knowledge, and experiences – political, economic and social. It claims it will also teach, and encourage them to construct knowledge and make new meanings. A love for learning will be fostered, as will creativity and innovation. Furthermore, learning aesthetically marks the return of holistic learning experiences that incorporate the sensory and intuitive, empowering the meaning making process. It provides learners with new tools, strategies and ways of knowing to create new knowledge. Learning in the arts also fulfills the aims of an ability-driven education where students predisposed to the arts

are allowed opportunities to excel in them; further resonating with the theory of multiple intelligences.

Through experiencing a Socratic education, Singaporeans will be capable of envisioning, and creating futures. These futures will contribute towards 'Singapore 21', where young Singaporeans will be confident of their identities, and place in Singapore; where they will feel ownership and responsibility towards creating desired experiences for themselves, and for others, making schools what Abbs terms 'cells of creative living' (Abbs, 1979: 86). They will also benefit from the life-skills and cognitive competencies aesthetic learning brings; all of which are essential for students' personal development, and will be harnessed as members of society and the workforce.

A Socratic education in Singapore schools will further resonate with *The Renaissance City* report. It will cultivate the Renaissance Singaporean who is 'an individual with an open, analytical and creative mind that is capable of acquiring, sharing, applying and creating new knowledge' (MITA, 2000, http://www.mita.gov.sg/renaissance/htm)[20]. The Renaissance Singaporean will be able to contribute effectively to making Singapore a vibrant city where creativity thrives, and the arts flourish. This is not only found in the role of an artist, but also when he or she 'appreciates, respects and constantly seeks out the work of artists, drawing from them inspiration, self-renewal and creative inputs' (ibid)[21].

[20] Chapter 5, *The Renaissance Singaporean*, pt. 5.
[21] Chapter 5, *The Renaissance Singaporean*, pt. 9.

However, more attention and effort must be paid in education towards creating this Renaissance Singaporean, particularly in the area of an aesthetic education. Students should be allowed to study all the art forms and not just art and music. Moreover, coherent, in-depth, and sustained programs need to be provided that also allow opportunities for specialization. Additionally, the necessary support structures and resources for a well-rounded aesthetic education need to be present, and educators and policy-makers need to be patient when evaluating results.

In conclusion, although Singapore is on the highway of survival and success in the 21st century, its education system needs to meet the challenges of equipping young Singaporeans sufficiently for the future. This is best provided by a Socratic education as an education that is based on the principles of Catoism and economic prosperity will not transport young Singaporeans safely into 'an uncertain future' of rapid change (Ministry of Education, 2000: 61). Instead, Abbs (1994: 8) states that education is 'an activity of mind, a particular emotional and critical orientation towards experience', and 'the expression and development of a primary impulse for truth', an instinct that we inherit as part of our nature (ibid: 16). It is therefore the role of schools to instill this love for learning, for searching for truth; creating students schooled in the experience of life, as it is these attitudes, values and skills that will see them through the smooth and bumpy roads that lie ahead.

3

METHODOLOGY

> More than likely, each of us will emerge (from the research) a slightly different person than the one we were when we began, not only with an increased knowledge of the phenomenon we set out to study, but also increased knowledge of ourselves.
>
> (Ely, 1991:108)

This chapter in the thesis will attempt to provide readers with what Silverman (2000: 236) calls, 'the natural history of my research'. It will take readers through the journey undertaken for this study – involving two countries, six school settings, and discussions with various artists and educationists involved with drama in education. It will also expose my beliefs, biases and emotions as a researcher, and how this may have impacted upon the research. Finally, the chapter will address issues concerning how the research was conducted, and findings analyzed and presented in this thesis.

Qualitative Research

> ... qualitative research involves an interpretive, naturalistic approach to the world. This means that qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or to interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them.
>
> (Denzin, 2000: 3)

Qualitative research was the modus operandi of this study and chosen to gain an understanding of the thoughts, feelings and processes of those involved in drama in education. Ely (1991: 4) states that, 'qualitative researchers want those who are studied to speak for themselves, to provide their perspectives in words and actions'.

Furthermore, this approach allowed me to observe the participants in a natural setting, the classroom which afforded me insights which would not be as rich and meaningful if only read about, or described.

Qualitative researchers recognize that it is impossible for any research to be objective because it requires interpretation. Eisner borrows from Dewey's work when he describes the research process as 'transactive'. He states that, 'the *transactive* is conceived of as the locus of human experience. It is the product of the interaction of two *postulated* entities, the objective and the subjective' (Eisner, 1991: 52). Because the world is mediated through our minds, it can never be totally objective because our knowledge is formed from our experiences, many of which are subjective. Ely goes one step further to embrace this transactive state:

> We believe that qualitative study is forged in the transaction among what is done and learned and what is felt by the researcher. It is an intensely recursive, personal process, and while this may be the hallmark of all sound research, it is crucial to every aspect of the qualitative way of looking at life.
>
> (Ely, 1991: 1)

Therefore, this study acknowledges that it is impossible for research to be objective. It does not strive to be. Instead, it reveals the process involved in conducting the research, the thought-processes, as well as emotions felt so that the reader may interpret the findings and conclusions through my eyes. This will allow the reader to locate more meaning from the study, and in turn, make new meaning through their own transactive states.

Purpose of the Field Work

The importance of conducting fieldwork for this study lay in wanting to understand the practices behind an aesthetic education. Although existing literature on aesthetic education shows its importance and rightful place in any curriculum, it was important for this study to see how this takes place, and whether it was being achieved in the field. Furthermore, while much has been written about the value of an aesthetic education, there has not been the same analysis in identifying the factors in an educational setting for this to occur. Most of these studies focus on teacher practice and do not look at the overall schooling experience. This study takes a holistic look at how an aesthetic education might be provided in schools.

The purpose of the fieldwork in Australia was to observe significant practices taking place in drama in education in Queensland schools, and evaluating the feasibility for them to be implemented in Singapore school settings. In Queensland, drama has been in the curriculum for more than twenty years, first as Speech and Drama, and then Drama. However, in Singapore, drama is still only a co-curricular activity offered in some schools and not a curriculum subject except for a handful of schools who have decided independently to use drama. This is in all cases solely as a teaching methodology. At the beginning of this study, I was not sure what these significant practices might be apart from experiences gained from previous work in drama in education in Singapore. I was also aware that what might be significant in Queensland might not be in Singapore, even though both countries are developed nations and economically quite similar.

The fieldwork in Singapore was mainly to consolidate and re-affirm my previous observations and experiences. Contact with drama in education was mostly through work done as Manager of the Theatre For Youth Branch[22] at The Necessary Stage (TNS), a non-profit theatre company in Singapore actively involved in education work[23]. It was also to discover new findings that were previously overlooked as the fieldwork provided me the opportunity to be a researcher rather than a manager. It allowed me to observe the drama in education classroom more closely, and take informed notes. I was also able to pursue areas of interest to the research which was previously impossible.

Conducting the fieldwork after reviewing literature on aesthetic education, and its practices also allowed me to review my previous experiences in a new light, and conduct the fieldwork with new understanding(s). It also provided me with a 'language' to record and make sense of these experiences. I was keen to observe other drama in education programs in schools other than those conducted by TNS to gain a wider understanding of the field in Singapore, in order to make relevant and meaningful recommendations in this study.

As the study began, I realized my aim was to take a holistic look at the schooling experience in terms of aesthetic education. I formulated numerous questions by the time I was ready to conduct the fieldwork and struggled as to how to organize them

[22] The Branch was re-named Theatre For Youth & Community in 2001.

[23] As manager, I facilitated the introduction of a drama in education program, *Development Through Drama* into some Singapore schools, in 1999. It was a rare occurrence where drama was conducted during curriculum time, and over a period of at least a year. Other experiences in drama in education came from contact with teachers, artists, educators, and policy makers through the course of the work, and by organizing focus groups, a national symposium, and workshop on drama in education.

coherently in order for findings later to be meaningful. As I was simultaneously reviewing literature for the study, I stumbled upon Eisner's 'ecology of schooling'. Eisner (1991:73) suggested that investigations into education could be classified into five dimensions: the Intentional, Structural, Curricular, Pedagogical, and Evaluative, collectively termed, 'the ecology of schooling'[24]. These five dimensions were useful in organizing my readings and fieldwork, and provided for a more coherent analysis later.

Taking a holistic look at practices that lead to aesthetic education in schools, and using the 'ecology of schooling' as a compass resulted in an organizational matrix for the fieldwork. This matrix involved school settings both in Queensland and Singapore, as well as theatre companies, artists, drama educators, curriculum writers, policy-makers, and academics in both countries[25]. This allowed for a holistic look at drama education in schools from more than one perspective, and also acknowledged that schools are part of a wider society and are impacted upon, and impact upon others. Furthermore, the findings from each school setting, and where appropriate, findings from interviewing others outside this setting, was examined against the five dimensions of 'the ecology of schooling'. A broad series of questions were developed for each dimension, and can be found at Appendix B: 4.

[24] The intentional dimension, 'deals with the goals or aims that are formulated for the school or a classroom.' Furthermore, these need to be examined closely to see whether these goals or aims take place in reality, and are conveyed effectively, what he terms the 'hidden curriculum' (Eisner, 1991: 73). The structural dimension looks at the 'organizational forms of schools' (ibid: 74) and deals with formal structures such as timetabling, space allocation, and so on. The curricular dimension focuses on 'the quality of the curriculum's content and goals and the activities employed to engage students in it' (ibid: 75). The pedagogical dimension casts the focus on teachers and their methods, and finally, the evaluative dimension looks at how assessment takes place in schools (ibid: 77 – 81).

[25] A visual representation of the matrix can be found at Appendix B: 5.

The Research Settings and Participants

Australia

The research in Australia was confined to Brisbane, Queensland. This was geographically suitable as it was where I was located, and had both primary and secondary schools that offered drama as a subject. Moreover, a few of these schools had a strong reputation for their drama programs, and proved to be rich sites for researching significant practice in aesthetic education. I chose to conduct the fieldwork in one primary and one secondary school so that I was able to observe a range of drama practice catered to different age groups. This also gave me the opportunity to observe primary and secondary drama syllabi operating in the classroom.

Another secondary school setting was later added as I felt doubtful whether the original one chosen would highlight significant classroom practice. However, I continued research at this original site to gain a better understanding of drama practices, and to ensure my judgments were not premature. It was useful that out of the two secondary schools observed, one was a public school, and the other, private as this contributed to the diversity of research settings. I had originally wanted to observe drama at another primary school, preferably a public school and one not trialling the new primary drama syllabus. This was to contrast with the existing primary school chosen. However, finding a suitable setting of this nature that was known for significant practice in the Brisbane area proved difficult as there are few primary schools who have drama as a subject in their curriculum.

The research settings and participants[26] in Brisbane were:

1. **Blessed Heart College**

A Catholic all-boys college catering for students years 5 – 12 (ten to seventeen years old). It is an inner-city college within a residential area. The college has a mix of students from diverse economic backgrounds although its students are mainly Italian and Anglo-Saxon. The College used to be an old farm and occupies large grounds with two main wings – the primary and secondary which consist of a variety of buildings and rooms of different sizes. It is low-rise and has a brick and glass feel to it, making it homey. There is a chapel on the school-grounds.

Teacher: Jenny

Jenny is a part-time specialist drama teacher at Blessed Heart College. She teaches a total of eleven hours a week at the school, for students years 5 – 7 (ten to twelve years old). She has been teaching at the school since 2000. Jenny has a background, and training in the performing arts, and teaching. She is a very experienced drama in education practitioner who has accrued a vast amount of

[26] Recommendations for the research settings selected for the fieldwork was by my supervisor who is one of the pioneers of drama in education in Queensland, and since I was unfamiliar with the drama in education field in Brisbane. This was important as the purpose of the study in Australia was to observe significant practice. The research participants in these education settings were known to my supervisor who helped me make the first point of contact with them, and gained their consent to participate in this study. I then proceeded to introduce myself, and explained the study. Similarly, recommending, and gaining the consent of research participants outside the school setting such as curriculum writers and theatre workers to be participants in the fieldwork was mostly through my supervisor, after we agreed on the scope of the study, and purpose for involving these participants in the fieldwork.

diverse experience in this field, from being involved in drama, youth theatre, and drama in education at both state and school levels for more than twelve years. Jenny continues to actively contribute to the growth of drama in education in Queensland, and is sought after as a consultant. She was also one of the practitioners spear-heading the development, and trialling of the new *The Arts Years 1 – 10 Syllabus.*

Jenny's professionalism, and years of experience in drama in education can be witnessed in the classroom. She is an effective teacher who understands the intricacies of an aesthetic education well. A firm, yet warm and approachable teacher, it is obvious the students like her, and enjoy drama classes. Tangible learning is easily observed in Jenny's classroom. Jenny is also very well-versed and familiar with drama, and drama in education academia. She is on top of her practice. This comes across in our interview, and other contact times with her. This contributes toward Jenny being respected in the wider drama in education field.

2. Springvale State High School

Springvale is an inner-city co-educational public school that is located within a residential area. It caters for students years 8 – 12 (thirteen to seventeen years old) and has a primary school equivalent situated nearby. It is also located near a tertiary institution. The grounds of the school are spread out and its buildings are more high-rise compared to Blessed Heart College. They have a concrete

feel generally, making it look more like an institution although the performing arts block is low-rise and a separate structure from the rest of the school. Springvale State High School serves 66 feeder schools and has a diverse mix of students, from different socio-economic and cultural backgrounds. Its performing arts department is known to have a good reputation, with many senior students traveling a significant distance to do the arts at this school.

Teacher: Donna

Donna is the Head of Department of Performing Arts at Springvale State High School. This involves drama, dance, music (including instrumental music) and media. She is an experienced teacher with eighteen years of teaching in schools. Donna trained in visual art as her primary area, and drama as her second teaching area. Previously, she had taught visual art and drama but now teaches only drama.

Donna is a confident teacher in the classroom, and exudes a no-nonsense air most of the time. However, she has a fun side that makes her appealing and approachable to students, observed in light-hearted exchanges between teacher and students. Perhaps Donna's sometimes business-like disposition can be attributed to the hectic nature of her role where she seems to be constantly pulled in all directions, and needed by various people simultaneously. However, her love for educating young people and the arts was clearly obvious during my interviews with her.

3. All Saints College

All Saints is a Christian co-educational college that caters to years 1 – 12 (six to seventeen years old). It also has boarding facilities. Situated in a suburb, the college is sprawling and consists of 21 hectares of land. The college caters mainly for middle to upper class students, and has quite a large percentage of foreign students. There are over 55 cultural groups represented at the college. The college is known for its high academic standards and offers a reasonable amount of scholarships each year. It used to be very selective in its enrolment but has relaxed recently, inviting anyone who can afford the fees to apply. All Saints feels less like an institution because of its large grounds which allows buildings to be built low-rise, and fairly spread out. A large chapel is situated on the school grounds. There is also a lot of greenery and nature around, making it feel like a school in the park.

Teacher: Karen

Karen is Head of Department of Performing Arts at All Saints College. This encompasses curriculum music and drama. Besides the senior school, she also oversees the junior school and her role thus extends from students years 1 – 12. Karen has a background and training in drama, and drama in education. She was involved with young people's theatre where she discovered her love for working with this age group, before becoming a teacher about ten years ago. Her love for working with young people leads her to be heavily involved in the

wider drama in education community, where she contributes regularly at state conferences and workshops. She also constantly involves herself, and her students in arts projects outside the school setting, where they can be part of a larger artistic community.

Karen is a warm and caring teacher, and well-liked and respected by her students. She is a confident and effective teacher in the classroom, and relates well to the students. On top of good practice, Karen is also familiar and conversant in drama, and drama in education theory. She keeps up-to-date with current research and is reflexive of her own practice. Karen has strong beliefs in the role of education, and an aesthetic education, which leads her to take her role very seriously. This involves not only being responsible for providing an empowering educational experience for her students, but also empowering the role of the arts in education and society by being a good role model and strong advocate.

Other people interviewed include:

4. **Dr. Brad Haseman**, Coordinator, Postgraduate Education and Research Training, Creative Industries Research and Applications Center, Queensland University of Technology

5. **Madonna Stinson**, Project Officer (The Arts), Queensland School Curriculum Council

6. **Adrienne Jones**, Head of Review Panel (Drama), Queensland Board of Senior Secondary School Studies, and Education Liaison Officer (Secondary), Queensland Arts Council

Other research participants that were interviewed but not listed above may be found in the full list of research participants at Appendix B: 6. They are listed to acknowledge their contribution to the shaping of the research.

Singapore

The fieldwork in Singapore allowed me to observe and record drama in education practice in the classroom, as well as gain a better understanding of the different dimensions in the school setting that impact upon drama in the curriculum[27].

I chose one primary, and one secondary school as my research settings so as to be able to observe a range of curriculum and teaching styles. Both schools were public schools and part of TNS' drama in education program, *Development Through Drama* for more than a year. The duration of the program in the schools was an important factor as

[27] The fieldwork was mostly confined to drama in education programs conducted by TNS as this afforded me easier access to research settings and participants since I was the manager of the company's school programs. Furthermore, one of the purposes of the fieldwork was to give me an opportunity to consolidate and study previous drama in education experiences gained through the company's programs. Findings from the overall study could then be implemented to improve on our drama in education programs which currently face numerous challenges. Another reason why the fieldwork in Singapore was confined largely to TNS' drama in education programs was that schools who incorporated drama into their curriculum usually hired artists to conduct the program. It was therefore difficult for me to observe the program of another theatre company as we are competitors in the same market.

teething problems new programs present, as well as later challenges that emerged could be studied. This provided more meaningful data.

I had also hoped as part of the fieldwork to study a drama in education program in a school that was conducted by a teacher. I knew finding such a setting would be difficult as to my knowledge at that time, there were no schools in Singapore that fit this criteria. The few schools that had drama in education usually integrated it into another subject, and the use of drama was not consistent. I was however fortunate to come across an ideal setting during the fieldwork, and I discovered that I knew the drama teacher at the school. It also happened that the school had simultaneously been in touch with TNS to explore a working relationship. Therefore, access to this setting was gained through a work and research context.

The research settings and participants in Singapore were:

1. **Mayflower Primary School**

Mayflower is a public funded school, located in a residential area. It is co-educational and caters to students from Primary 1 – 6 (seven to twelve years old). The school recently re-located to a new and bigger premises in the same locale, as part of the Ministry of Education's PRIME (Program for Rebuilding and Improving Existing Schools) plan[28]. The school is also unique because it is located within a park. Although the school premises are large, they are not

[28] This scheme provides schools with larger classrooms, latest facilities, and technological possibilities. Mayflower was the first school to be re-opened under PRIME and underwent an elaborate dinner celebration that featured a school musical, and saw the Deputy Prime Minister as the Guest-of-Honor.

comparable to Brisbane as land is scarce is Singapore. Therefore, school buildings are high-rise and built close together. They are also concrete and officious looking.

Mayflower Primary has earned itself a good reputation in education, and is a popular school in its neighborhood. It is known for its enrichment programs that are non-curricular subjects conducted during curriculum time[29]. These programs focus on developing students' multiple intelligences and are offered at every level of schooling. The school has also earned itself a reputation for promoting the Arts, and has been awarded due recognition by the Ministry of Education. Most of the students come from the residential areas surrounding the school, and are from families in the lower socio-economic group. They come from a mix of cultural backgrounds although most of the students are Chinese.

Artist: Ruth

Ruth is a freelance artist who has been involved in theatre in Singapore for more than ten years. Her experiences include both performing using multi-disciplinary art forms, as well as arts education. Ruth's background and training in drama in education includes a diploma in Speech and Drama, and numerous years of experience conducting drama programs in schools. Besides being contracted to conduct *Development Through Drama* with TNS, Ruth also works with other theatre companies, and commercial companies who use drama in

[29] Mayflower Primary is the pioneering school for TNS' *Development Through Drama* program, where it has been conducted for the past three years; albeit with a different cohort of students each year.

learning in schools. She also teaches drama part-time at a few tertiary institutions in Singapore, and continues to perform for the stage.

Ruth is a firm yet fun-loving teacher in the classroom. The students respect her and are keen to get her approval. They enjoy drama lessons with enthusiasm, and energy-levels are high in every class. Ruth is a confident and effective teacher. She understands her students well, and is able to remember the name of every student even though she teaches about two hundred students at Mayflower Primary School, for only an hour a week. Her love for teaching children is apparent in the classroom, and she feels responsible for providing them with empowering educational experiences. Her practice demonstrates innovative curriculum and different strategies and approaches in the classroom. She also spends additional effort on students with behavioral problems. Ruth is an advocate for arts education and has been canvassing support for aesthetic education in schools. She is currently looking into setting up an association for drama in education in Singapore.

2. Orchid Secondary School

Orchid Secondary, like Mayflower Primary, is a public funded school. It caters for students from Secondary 1 – 4 (thirteen to sixteen year olds), and like most other secondary schools, allows students who are slower learners to do another year of schooling before sitting for their exit exams. The school is located within a residential area with most of the students coming from that locale. The

school building looks like most other schools in Singapore – high-rise, compact and concrete. It is co-educational and features a mix of students from the different cultural groups in Singapore although most of the students are either Chinese or Malay. Students at the school are from the lower to middle socio-economic groups.

Orchid Secondary is an average school. Its students were once notorious and were known to have many discipline problems. Its image has improved over the years but students with discipline problems, or problems with the law are not rare in the school. This makes teaching in the school sometimes challenging. Orchid Secondary aims to be value-added[30] by 2003. The school recently underwent a change in management with a new Principal. This has brought changes to the psyche of the school which has become more disciplinarian, and academically oriented.

Artists: The artists at this school conducting the *Development Through Drama* program by TNS were not studied in-depth for the fieldwork as the program underwent a change in artists two-thirds into the program. An in-depth study was not thought useful since they were relatively unfamiliar with the setting, students and drama program. However, observations on classroom practice took place, and judgments were made in context.

[30] A value-added school is a term constructed by the Ministry of Education. It is given to schools who manage to consistently raise the academic standards of their students. This is shown in the overall leaving school examination results after they are compared to the results of the students when they first entered the school. Value-added schools gain a better reputation, and more funding from the Ministry of Education.

3. Merlion Secondary School

Merlion Secondary is a public school in a residential area. It is a co-educational school catering for students from Secondary 1 – 4 (thirteen to sixteen years old). Like Orchid Secondary, students with learning difficulties are allowed an additional year of schooling. Previously an average school, it has in the past few years raised its academic standards, and now offers a range of enrichment programs and learning experiences outside the core curriculum. On top of these programs, drama and dance are niche areas in the school. This means that these two art forms have been identified for further development, and will be used by Merlion Secondary to set itself apart from other schools through attaining a high standard in these areas.

Merlion Secondary was ranked one of the top twenty secondary schools in Singapore in 2000. The progress of the school has earned itself an Autonomous[31] status in education which has in turn, contributed to its prestige. The increase in funding accompanying the accolade allows the school to continue to provide unique and innovative learning opportunities for its students. This is reflected in the school surroundings. While the school looks similar to most other school structures in Singapore externally, internally it boasts landscape architecture, a butterfly sanctuary, and facilities for aquaponics. It also has facilities for the Arts, such as studios for music, dance

[31] This was a term constructed by the Ministry of Education in 1994. It is given to schools who have consistently managed to achieve good academic and non-academic results. The school also has to be well-established and gained parental and public support and recognition. Schools with this status are given more autonomy to make decisions apart from the Ministry of Education. They are also equipped with better facilities, and are given more funding.

and drama. Artworks are also displayed around the school, lending color and a vibrancy to the school environment. Information technology is also a priority at Merlion Secondary, and every student has a personal workspace on the computer network. This allows lessons to take place online, on top of classroom learning.

Students at Merlion Secondary are from all parts of the island, and come from a mixture of lower to middle socio-economic groups. They are also culturally diverse although the majority of students are Chinese. Students' academic standards are higher than the national average and need to be in order to qualify for the school. They are also specially trained by the school to participate in Mathematics Olympiads, IT competitions and research on the environment and life sciences. Students at this school tend to be generally well-behaved and have a genuine interest in learning. This makes teaching easier and a more enjoyable experience at this school.

Teacher: Jessie

Jessie is a full-time drama teacher at Merlion Secondary School. Her teaching load also includes English, and she is in charge of the school's Drama Club. Jessie is formally trained in drama pedagogy and joined Merlion Secondary in 2000. As a new teacher, she has already convinced the school to incorporate drama into the curriculum, and led the Drama Club to win first place in a national drama competition for schools. She was recently tasked to develop

drama as a niche area in the school, and to look into the possibility of offering drama as an elective subject students can take for their leaving school examinations. Jessie is an advocate for drama in education and can be found presenting at national conferences and workshops.

Jessie is an energetic and fun teacher in the classroom. She is entertaining to watch and her students draw on her positive energy in the classroom. It is obvious they like her and enjoy drama tremendously. Jessie understands the age-group of her students well, and is able to pitch activities and lessons that will benefit them. She relates very well with them, and use their 'lingo'. Her grasp of drama practice in the classroom is very strong, and her lessons are impactful. Jessie believes that drama in education offers students empowering experiences and she aims to provide them with an aesthetic education, and to help them find their 'voice'. She sees herself as a nurturer, and strives to help students develop a love for learning.

Other people interviewed include:

4. **Ms Ngeow Ah Cheng**, Principal, Mayflower Primary School

5. **English Head of Department**, Orchid Secondary School

6. **Dr. Stephen Hazell**, Head of Department, Literature and Drama, National Institute of Education

Role as Researcher

During the study, I viewed my role as researcher as a precious and privileged one. I realized how busy teachers are and appreciated the amount of time they spared for me. They were also gracious to allow me to observe their classroom practice, knowing that I would be making judgments. This generosity was even more apparent where I was a stranger to the teachers in Brisbane.

Eisner views the researcher in an educational setting as a connoisseur. He states that, 'connoisseurship is the art of appreciation', and is 'the ability to make fine-grained discriminations among complex and subtle qualities' (Eisner, 1991: 63). That is, the researcher as connoisseur needs a thorough understanding of the educational setting one is in, with all its intricacies and complexities. The five dimensions in the 'ecology of schooling' acted as starting points for me, the researcher to act as the connoisseur. I have tried to live up to the expectations of a connoisseur while conducting the fieldwork. However, there were moments of self-doubt as I wondered if my lack of formal training in drama pedagogy was a liability. Most of my knowledge of drama in education practice in schools comes from working experience, and from the literature reviewed for the study. I hoped this would be sufficient for me to make valid judgments, and as Ely states, 'to rely on ourselves as the primary research tool' (Ely, 1991:108).

Ely (1991: 44 – 45) states that there are two types of observers when conducting the fieldwork, the 'limited observer' and the 'privileged observer'[32]. I had the experience of filling both roles while conducting the fieldwork for this study; being a limited observer in the research settings in Brisbane, and a privileged observer in Singapore. Both roles had their merits and pitfalls.

As a limited observer in Brisbane, I had to rely on my supervisor to recommend appropriate research settings as I was unfamiliar with schools in this country. It also took time to familiarize myself with the education system, and schooling structures in Queensland. I had to build trust with the research participants, and had to rely heavily on their goodwill and schedule to accommodate the fieldwork. This meant that there were sometimes gaps between classroom observations. Some of the teachers were also difficult to get hold of, and I had to wait for them to get in touch with me. The merits of this role was that I was seen solely as a researcher. Therefore, research participants did not doubt my sincerity, and knew that the fieldwork was conducted in the name of research. Being a stranger and foreigner, perhaps they were more willing to confide in me as my contact, and relationship with them and the wider community would be limited. Being unfamiliar with schooling in Brisbane also allowed me to see everything with 'new eyes' and to make fewer assumptions.

Being the manager of TNS' school programs meant that I was able to be a privileged observer in Singapore. I was familiar with the artists conducting the program, as well

[32] The limited observer observes, asks questions, and builds trust with the research participants over time. He or she does not have a public role other than that of a researcher. The privileged observer, on the other hand is someone who is known and trusted by the research participants, and therefore given easy access to the research setting and information required.

as the research settings. This familiarity gave me easy access to information, and the setting, and I reaped the benefits of existing trust with the research participants. I also had more control over the scheduling of classroom observations. Being a privileged observer also meant I knew the nuances and background information on the settings and participants. This sometimes enabled me to make more informed judgments on data. It also gave me the confidence to make claims as compared to Brisbane where the limited time spent in the setting, and with the participants made me cautious of making claims[33].

However, being a privileged observer meant that I had to be more cautious and self-reflexive when making judgments on data in Singapore. This was to ensure that I was not being biased from making too many assumptions by being overly familiar with the setting and participants. Ely (1991: 17) states that, 'it seems that it is increasingly important to study the familiar, but without the blinders that familiarity often attaches to us'. I had to remind myself to remove those blinders when conducting the fieldwork. Furthermore, being a privileged observer meant that I had more responsibility towards maintaining existing trust with the research participants. I had to be careful about how to represent them and the research settings in the study, in order to not offend anyone and affect our working relationship. It is also acknowledged that while being familiar to the participants might have enabled them to trust me more, our work-based relationship might have made some of them wary when sharing information even though the context was research-based.

[33] It was especially difficult for me to report on negative classroom practice in Brisbane as I felt perhaps I had not immersed myself enough in the setting. This was compared to Singapore where I had contact with the research settings, participants and drama program for at least a year, and more.

Another challenge that I faced being a privileged observer was distinguishing between the two hats I was wearing while conducting the fieldwork. Ely (1991: 52) cautions that 'qualitative researchers need to remind themselves that their job is to describe, not fix, not judge'. I found this difficult at times and felt that as manager of the drama in education program, I was responsible for improving the program. There were numerous times I was tempted to intervene in the program in order to improve practice, and was frustrated with not being able to immediately implement in the classroom what I had learnt in Brisbane. In situations where I had to intervene as manager, I was clear on the consequences of my actions, and noted them in context. I drew comfort from Ely's statement (ibid: 24) that 'most people learn to walk the fine line between "contributing" and "researching" that serves both the research process and the social unit being studied'.

Besides the researcher being a connoisseur, he or she also needs to be a critic whose aim is to disclose (Eisner, 1991:85). Eisner terms criticism as 'the art of disclosure' where the primary function of the critic is educational. This means 'providing the material through which perception is increased and understanding deepened' (ibid: 85). It involved a process of data analysis, and together with the literature reviewed, providing conclusions to the aims of the study.

As a critic, I was faced with the enormity of the task behind analyzing the data collected. It was daunting at first, and I hoped that I would be clear-headed enough to pull all the data together to create useful findings. The same self-doubts I had while filling the role of connoisseur due to the lack of formal training in drama in education

came back as I wondered whether I would find anything really worthwhile, or ground-breaking to say about the data collected. At some points I was affected emotionally as the amount of work and relatively short period of time I had to write the study due to work commitments got the better of me. Being isolated from loved ones, and in a foreign country were also contributing factors. Furthermore, being away from the field made it easier to forget the motivating factors for the research, and I often felt anxious to return to work and implement what I had learnt, and the significant practices observed.

However, I persisted, reminding myself of the larger role a critic plays in contributing towards overall research in the field, and the responsibility I had to the drama in education community in Singapore where dialogue and discussion on arts education is scarce.

Methods of Data Collection

Ethnography was the research strategy adopted for the fieldwork. This involved observing drama practice in the classroom in the research settings, as well as interviewing participants on the different dimensions of drama in education based on 'the ecology of schooling'. It also involved studying any relevant material on the research settings and participants for a better understanding of their attitudes and practices.

Field Log

> The log contains data upon which the analysis is begun and carried forward. It is the home for the substance that we use to tease out meanings and reflect upon them as they evolve. The log is the place where each qualitative researcher faces the self as instrument through a personal dialogue about moments of victory and disheartenment, hunches, feelings, insights, assumptions, biases, and ongoing ideas about method.
>
> (Ely, 1991:69)

I first came across the idea of a field log while reading Ely's work on qualitative research. My impression of it was like a diary except done with more rigor and description. I realized the importance of the log in recording my thoughts and feelings as the study commenced in order to document the research process. It also made me more self-aware and conscious of what I was thinking and feeling. Moreover, the research process was of a significant amount of time and it was impossible to commit everything to memory. Classroom observations were recorded in the log contributing to data collection being an organized and systematic process. This helped the analytic task later. Furthermore, the recordings enabled me to reflect on the research process later on in the study while analyzing data. This helped in the examination of bias, and ensured events were remembered correctly. I was also reminded of the context an observation was made[34].

However, there were some initial challenges in using the field log. I grappled with how much to write in the log in order for it to be useful. I was also unsure how much description was necessary from the classroom observations when doing the log entries. It took me time to get used to writing in the descriptive before making judgments

[34] Samples of field log entries can be found at Appendix B: 12.

during classroom observations. However, adhering to this process forced me to distinguish between what I saw, and what I thought and felt. This allowed a clearer analysis later, and to reveal decision-making processes to the reader by giving examples when reporting the study.

Interviews

> Interviews are at the heart of doing ethnography because they seek the words of the people we are studying, the richer the better, so that we can understand their situations with increasing clarity.
>
> (Ely, 1991: 58)

The interviews conducted with the research participants were crucial to the study. They allowed me to gain a more in-depth understanding of drama in education practices in schools in areas that extended beyond classroom practice. The interviews also provided opportunities to probe the thoughts and feelings of research participants which were not as transparent when observing practice. As well, it enabled me to clarify events witnessed in the classroom.

As an ethnographic interviewer, preparing for the interview included drafting a series of questions beforehand. This was done using the broad questions identified in each of the dimensions in 'the ecology of schooling' as a guide to develop more detailed and relevant questions. Questions were tailored according to the research participant, and aims of the interview. However, the nature of these questions often changed and had to be adapted during the interview itself to accommodate the natural progression and flow of the interview, gauged by the interviewee's responses. This tested my ability to be

flexible, and the familiarity with the objectives of the interview and questions I had prepared. Improvisation often had to be done on the spot, and an openness required to treat all responses as potentially significant, and not censoring them for fear of irrelevance. Judgment also had to be suspended and a conscious effort made not to condone or condemn any responses to prevent influencing, and causing biased responses.

School and Program Documents

In addition to classroom observations and interviews, relevant school and drama program documents were examined to provide more clues to the investigative process of the fieldwork. These included school yearbooks, prospectus and other material on school philosophy and psyche. It involved studying drama curriculum and lesson plans. In Singapore, this process included going through minutes taken of previous meetings pertaining to TNS' drama in education program. All these documents contributed towards the collection of rich and meaningful data.

Data Analysis

> To analyze is to find some way or ways to tease out what we consider to be essential meaning in the raw data; to reduce and reorganize and combine so that the readers share the researcher's findings in the most economical, interesting fashion. The product of analysis is a creation that speaks to the heart of what was learned.
>
> (Ely, 1991: 140)

Analyzing the data collected from the fieldwork was an exciting and suspenseful experience. Although the data was tossed around my mind throughout the fieldwork, it was refreshing and exciting to view the data again and in its entirety, similar to piecing together a jigsaw puzzle. It was also suspenseful as I was unsure what the final findings would look like, and whether I was able to contribute anything significant to furthering research in drama in education.

The data analysis from the fieldwork involved combing through the field log entries, interviews, and school and drama program documents to familiarize myself with the data. Findings were sieved through and decisions made on which of the five dimensions in 'the ecology of schooling' would data be most appropriately categorized. A system of identification for each dimension was created and used to organize the findings. This was done for each research setting and participant, and in each country. Findings in each of the dimensions were then recorded separately, and examined in more detail to identify patterns in the data, such as similarities, or data that correlated or had causal effects. These further findings were then grouped together and given another sub-category and heading within each dimension. This process was repeated for the data collected in each country. Finally, an analysis of data across countries in each dimension, across dimensions, and in relation to the literature review was conducted to produce the overall findings and conclusions made in the study.

Analysis leads naturally to interpretation and issues relating to generalization are raised. Eisner (1991: 203) terms generalization as, 'the use of the particular to say something about the general' and also calls it, 'the concrete universal'. 'The concrete

universal is regarded as a true rendering of universal features through "exemplification"' (ibid). There are two uses to generalization; it performs an anticipatory and retrospective function (Eisner, 1991: 205). The former allows us to use our generalization to think about, and shape our future to which the generalization is relevant while the latter involves using our findings not to anticipate the future, but 'by encountering or formulating an idea that allows us to see our past experience in a new light' (ibid: 205). However, this retrospective generalization can then also perform an anticipatory function.

Both types of generalization have been employed in this study. Retrospective generalization applies to the study in Singapore where previous experiences in drama in education were considered and used in the data analysis. The overall findings of this study were then used to make generalizations about the future, mainly recommendations for drama in education for Singapore. The contexts for these generalizations however, have been specified and need to be considered when studying the conclusions made.

It is acknowledged that data analysis and interpretation for this study took place through particular paradigms; namely, the aesthetic, critical pedagogy and constructivism. This means recognizing that generalizations made from the study are not truths per se and could be different if made through the lens of different paradigms. However, as Eisner states,

> The conditional quality of educational life, its high degree of context specificity, is formidable. What this means for practice and for the uses of research is that in most settings generalizations derived from research are not likely to be taken as gospel. .... We offer considerations to be shared and discussed, reflected upon, and debated .... Their generalizing qualities are not so much located in Truth, as in their ability to refine perception and to deepen conversation.
>
> (Eisner, 1991: 204)

Therefore, the generalizations from this study are truths that contribute towards creating dialogue and discussion, and further research on drama in education in Singapore.

Establishing Credibility

As researcher, I took several steps to ensure findings reported were credible. This involved acknowledging the limits of being a connoisseur and critic, and trying to reduce these limitations as far as possible.

Ely states that as ethnographic observer, '... even at our most unintrusive, we influence the very phenomenon we are studying' (Ely, 1991: 47). Thus, as a connoisseur in the classroom, I was aware of the impact I had on the setting observed, and tried to reduce any unwanted consequences as much as possible. This involved trying to be as inconspicuous in the classroom, and reacting neutrally to events in the classroom to prevent influencing responses. Furthermore, Ely quotes Levine as saying that, 'we will never be entirely free of our own preferred ways of viewing situations and our own biases. We can, however, be more self-aware' (Levine in Ely, 1991: 54). I attempted to be self-reflexive while conducting the fieldwork and reminded myself to make clear

distinctions in describing observations, and making judgments. Judgments were also made cautiously and steps were taken to ensure that behaviors observed in the classroom were consistent. This involved switching classes observed in one of the settings to ensure teacher practice was consistent across classes.

Steps were also taken as critic to contribute to the credibility of the study. This surfaced ethical issues in research methodology. Ely (1991: 225) mentions that we are being ethical when we strive to be faithful to another's viewpoint, when we strive to maintain confidentiality, and when we strive to be trustworthy. It is important to be ethical for the integrity of the research itself, for the participants whom we work with, and for the broader social implications of qualitative research.

In this study, I strove to be ethical by keeping all my sources of data anonymous except when they have requested otherwise. All transcripts of interviews were given to the various sources for member checking. As well, I attempted to be trustworthy through achieving the triangulation on data collected; through observations and interpretations that have been reinforced through interviews and literature reviewed, and vice versa. Direct quotations from research participants have been included in the reporting of findings, as well as extracts from field log entries to allow the data to speak for itself. Furthermore, where there were negative cases, or 'evidence that does not fit into our emergent findings' (ibid: 98), I have included them in the study.

Other steps I took as critic to establish credibility for the study included being reflexive and reflective when analyzing data, and reporting on the research. This acknowledged

my transactive state as researcher, and the impossibility of re-creating the field when reporting on the study. Eisner (1991: 86) exemplifies the latter point when he states, 'with no rules of equivalence, there is no one-to-one correspondence of referent to symbol. Thus every criticism is a reconstruction'. Thus, steps were taken to bring the 'public spotlight' on my decision-making processes when making judgments in the reporting of the study (Ely, 1991: 156). Hopefully, this allows readers to decide for themselves whether claims made were valid.

Reporting on Data

Data from the fieldwork, and interpretations made will be reported in the following three chapters of the study. Data is reported against the five dimensions in 'the ecology of schooling' – the Intentional, Structural, Curricular, Pedagogical and Evaluative dimensions in chapters four and five, allowing for a clearer and more organized reading of the findings.

Findings from Brisbane in Queensland, Australia will be reported first in the proceeding chapter, followed by findings from Singapore in chapter five. Finally, the last chapter of the study will report on interpretations, and conclusions made from the fieldwork in both countries, as well as the literature review[35]. This concluding chapter will also include recommendations for the continuing development of drama in education in Singapore, thus echoing Ely's sentiment, 'in "doing" qualitative research

[35] Findings from the five dimensions will be synthesized across dimensions and countries, and will therefore be organized under broader headings.

we enact what we value. In reflecting upon that, we better understand our commitments. With awareness, we can act again as we see the need' (Ely, 1991: 232).

The study now turns to the reporting of findings from the fieldwork conducted.

4

LOOKING FOR SIGNIFICANT PRACTICE IN QUEENSLAND

This chapter is interested in conveying findings of significant drama in education practice found in the course of research in Brisbane, Queensland, Australia. It is also interested in providing an analysis of what these findings mean in light of the importance of an aesthetic education and its outcomes.

Findings from the fieldwork will be reported against the dimensions identified earlier for an aesthetic education to take place – the Intentional, Structural, Curricular, Pedagogical and Evaluative dimensions. The chapter will end with conclusions, and outline some challenges for the future.

The Intentional Dimension

The Intentional Dimension is concerned with the aims and goals formulated for the school and classroom. This study investigated the macro aims of education reflected in the policy document, *2010 Queensland State Education* (2000)[36], as well as the aims of education in the three research settings: Blessed Heart College; Springvale State High School; and All Saints College. Findings from the research settings revealed aims with a common focal point: empowering the student.

[36] Key points extracted from *2010* can be found at Appendix B: 7.

Aims of Drama In Education

All three schools studied during the fieldwork recognized the role drama played in empowering students. These schools positioned students at the center of their philosophy with aims that fell into three main categories[37]: recognizing students as individuals and developing their individual potentials, providing a holistic education, and thirdly, critical education for all students.

Drama provides students with opportunities to explore and challenge their individual values, perceptions and qualities through an aesthetic education. It facilitates the personal development of each student, looking at 'how (they got) to this point and what are the kind of people they would like to be' (Karen, Appendix A: 3, lines 94 - 97). Drama is also able to identify and develop the different intelligences in students through its all-encompassing form and flexible content.

Incorporating drama into the curriculum enables schools to provide a holistic education for students. One of the aims of Blessed Heart College gleaned from the college prospectus states: 'The College is concerned with affective, intellectual, social, cultural, religious and physical development' (College prospectus, 2001).

Drama also provides a critical education for students where schools aim to encourage independent and critical thinking, and conformity for its own sake is discouraged. This was found in Springvale State High School's aim 'to develop confident, self-directed

[37] A more detailed description of these aims can be found at Appendix B: 8.

knowledgeable people who think creatively and critically and are equipped to participate in society's decision making process' (College prospectus, 2000). Donna (HOD, Springvale State High School) explains that even though drama is an artistic discipline, 'we are always analyzing, or criticizing or (looking) at a world issue' (Appendix A: 2, lines 106 - 107).

The Structural Dimension

This dimension looks at the formal structures that are in place for drama in education to succeed. The findings fall into two main categories – support of key people in the school and community, and physical resources.

The most important determinant was the role of the Principal as a factor for the success of the arts in schools. Research found that staff and administrative support contributed toward the well-being of drama within the school. Support from parents was also crucial and influenced enrolment numbers and the quality of programs. The findings show that teachers drew moral, and tangible support for their practice from the wider professional community. Furthermore, the wider education system supported drama in schools by providing a supply of professionally trained teachers.

The physical structures identified contributing toward drama in education's success in schools included the factors of space and time. They affected the amount, and level of aesthetic learning that occurred during drama.

Support from the Principal

The Principal's support for drama determines the success of the subject in a school[38].

Fieldwork conducted in Brisbane found that support from the Principal could be intangible or philosophical, as well as tangible. While tangible support is more easily observed, intangible support is just as important. Donna (HOD, Springvale State High School) described her relationship with her principal as 'positive' and this impacts upon the quality of arts programs being offered; leading to high enrolment numbers (Appendix A: 2, lines 477 – 479 & 507 - 510). Karen (HOD, All Saints College) appreciates that her Principal understands the intrinsic worth of drama in education, and feels supported in 'a school environment which appreciates excellence in the arts beyond the performance outcomes' (Appendix A: 3, lines 692 - 693). She is relieved that she is not pressured to present classroom work or performances to parents or the wider community for the sake of a showcase.

The forms of tangible support from a Principal excavated from the fieldwork included hiring specialist drama teachers for the school, as is the case at Blessed Heart College. At All Saints College, Karen (HOD, All Saints College) receives tangible support such as: having access to ten hours of teaching-aid a week; time-tabling support; relief for

[38] A study conducted by Haseman (1990) looked at the status of drama in education in Queensland schools and found that the first few years of having drama in a school were crucial for winning the Principal's support, and establishing a status for the subject. Furthermore, negative student attitudes towards drama seemed to be more widely felt when there was poor support from the Principal for the subject. Findings from the different studies conducted in the *Champions of Change* (1999) from USA discussed earlier in the Literature Review also listed the support of the Principal as a factor contributing towards the success of arts programs in schools.

the extra duties she is involved in professionally; and acknowledgement of co-curricular involvement by receiving an honorarium. As well, her department is able to purchase good technical equipment and afford a good resource library. Furthermore, drama receives a 'generous recurrent budget' (Appendix A: 3, line 410). Karen shared that with $5,000 allocated to a senior performance, she is able to employ artists-in-residence for her students, 'which is fantastic and provides the seniors with the opportunity to have a very real industry performance experience in Year 12' (lines 414 - 418).

Finally, the fieldwork revealed that while the Principal's support seemed unconditional, gaining recognition from external bodies for the school's drama program was significant. Donna (HOD, Springvale State High School) stated:

> ... and the fact that we are showcasing the school so much, for example, we are doing three performances in three different venues for Education Week – dance, drama and music; things like that the Principal recognizes, and when the thank-you letters come from Arts Queensland, or the Premier, or other areas in the government, that also helps.
>
> (Appendix A: 2, lines 481 - 486)

Thus, recognition of a school's contribution to the wider community through the arts help to reinforce positive support for arts subjects in the curriculum.

Support from Staff and Administration

Beyond the principal's support, support of the other teaching staff and administration is important in realizing an aesthetic education[39].

The study in Brisbane found that the non-drama staff and administrators were generally supportive of drama in the research settings. For example, they would lend their support for drama co-curricular activities such as school plays and musicals by volunteering to help with the production elements. Other forms of support would be in the form of attendance at drama events organized by the schools. However, support sometimes had to be earned.

Jenny (Specialist Drama Teacher, Blessed Heart College) related the experience of having to re-educate the staff and particularly, administration about what drama in education entailed in order to gain their support for the program. The staff at this college had a product-oriented, performance-based understanding of what drama was and she had 'to re-educate them to not do (an annual) concert but that we were actually doing classroom presentations' (Appendix A: 1, lines 383 - 385). This process of re-education helped to ensure the objectives of the drama program were not compromised.

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[39] In a study, *Learning In and Through the Arts* in the *Champions of Change* report, researchers found that school administrators played a central role in ensuring the continuity and depth of provision of arts learning programs in schools which valued the arts. It was the school administrators who 'encouraged teachers to take risks, learn new skills, and broaden their curriculum' (Burton, Horowitz & Abeles, 1999: 40 - 41).

Donna (HOD, Springvale State High School) has been trying to widen the support of non-arts teachers for arts subjects at the school, and to forge closer ties amongst the different faculties. This was through encouraging the rest of the teaching staff to get involved in the school musical, demonstrating that 'we (the Performing Arts Department) are not an isolated team of highly creative aesthetic people who are not willing to let others share and work with us (Appendix A: 2, lines 401 - 402)[40].

Space

Drama lessons require appropriate spaces to be effective. The fieldwork included observations on the facilities for drama in the research settings, and a description of the various spaces was noted. Findings derived that facilities for drama were most suitable at All Saints College, and least ideal at Blessed Heart College[41].

Findings from the fieldwork included the contribution an evocative classroom environment made to the learning process. Efforts were made at All Saints College for the drama classroom to be inviting for learning through drama. The design material and photographs of drama productions, articles, and student work on the walls of the classroom served to remind students of the aesthetic learning that took place in the room. Furthermore, the college was in the process of converting a double classroom into a studio space with lighting bars, curtains and technological possibilities, thereby enhancing students' artistic experiences further.

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[40] Although response at the time of the interview was quite poor with only five or six staff out of eighty-seven stepping forward to lend their support, Donna nevertheless thought it was a positive start.

[41] A description of these two spaces taken from field log entries can be found at Appendix B: 12, pg. 25 lines 16 – 26 & pg. 21, lines 22 – 32.

Similarly, at Springvale State High School, drama lessons took place in an auditorium, on a proscenium stage; a potent symbol for drama. On the other hand, the lack of a space devoted solely to drama at Blessed Heart College had led to unmarked spaces for drama. There were no clues or symbols in the rooms where drama was conducted to denote to students they were learning aesthetically, or to stimulate their imagination.

Efforts were underway at both Springvale State High School and All Saints College to build a Performing Arts building at the schools. This would provide better facilities for the arts, as well as house all the art forms in the school under one roof. Presently, faculty and rooms for different art forms were located at different parts of the school which made communication and collaboration challenging. Both Donna and Karen, the respective Heads of Department for the Performing Arts at these two schools welcomed the new facility and were encouraged by the structural support they were receiving for the arts.

Time

Apart from space being a physical resource necessary for the success of drama in education, time was found to be another important variable. The fieldwork revealed that careful time-tabling was important for an effective lesson. Furthermore, a sufficient amount of time needed to be allocated for aesthetic learning to occur. Besides the importance of time in relation to student learning, it was found that the amount of time teachers had to plan and reflect affected the quality of lessons. The quality of

teaching was also influenced by the amount of continuous time teachers experienced with a similar cohort of students.

The amount of time devoted to drama, and the amount of time per period in the research settings observed differed[42]. Students at Springvale State High School experienced 210 minutes of drama a week at the senior level. This translated into two double periods of 35 minutes each, and two single periods a week[43]. At Blessed Heart College, periods were in blocks of 45 minutes. Students in years 5 and 6 had a period of drama a week, while the year 7's had double that amount. Jenny (Specialist Drama Teacher, Blessed Heart College) stated that this was 'fantastic because they are the kids which have a lot of skills under their belt' (Appendix A: 1, lines 135 - 136). However, it was noted that even with a 45 minute lesson, both lessons I observed seemed to run out of time very quickly, with evaluation taking place the following week. This was not ideal for effective aesthetic learning as students might have forgotten their experiences in the classroom by then, thereby hampering the meaning making process.

Another finding relating to time is the issue of continuity. Jenny (Specialist Drama Teacher, Blessed Heart College) had taken the year 6 class I observed since the students were in Year 5. She was able to bring examples from their previous work into current lessons, and the students have relevant experiences to draw from and make

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[42] *The Arts Years 1 – 10 Syllabus* recommends a minimum of 100 hours a year for learning in the five art forms for the first seven years of schooling. Students may chose to specialize in an art form(s) from years 8 to 10 where a minimum of 180 hours per art form is recommended (Queensland School Curriculum Council, 2001: 22). The *Drama Senior Syllabus* recommends at least 110 hours of learning a year (Queensland Board of Senior Secondary School Studies, 2000: 12).

[43] This applied to the mainstream drama students as opposed to students in the extended drama class. The latter consisted of 14 auditioned students who were pursuing drama as a vocation. These students experienced double the amount of drama lessons a week, totaling 420 minutes per week.

comparisons to. At Springvale, Donna (HOD, Springvale State High School) mentioned why this continuity was important:

> So I take them on a journey, from Year 10 to 11 to 12, and I think that consistency is important to their learning. I think classes that have the same teachers for two years and more is better because you get to know the students more – their histories, their backgrounds, where they want to go, their futures.
>
> (Appendix A: 2, lines 548 - 553)

Besides examining how the facets of time impact upon student learning, the fieldwork also discovered that how teachers spent their time in the settings also influenced student learning in the classroom. In particular, it was found that the heavy workload and responsibilities of a Head of Department, in this case Donna (Springvale State High School), together with the minimal assistance she had affected the amount of time she had to plan and reflect on drama lessons[44]. This could have a detrimental effect on the quality of aesthetic experiences in the drama classroom.

Support from Parents

Interviews conducted with the research participants found parents' support played a role in helping to shape drama at the school[45]. They revealed that parental support could be manifested in a few ways: taking an active interest in the subject; attending

[44] Donna's role or broad job description can be broken down to teaching, management and administration, in-service and professional development, and extra-curricular activities. A full description of her duties can be found in Appendix A: 2, lines 298 - 312.

[45] A study commissioned by the Australia Council for the Arts in 2000, titled *Australians and the Arts*, found that the amount of parental support and encouragement a child received in the arts was important in determining whether he/she continued to pursue arts-related activities upon leaving school. This was found to be more significant than whether the child enjoyed his/her arts education experience in school. Consequently, the report recommended that 'the role of formal school-based arts education should be clearly integrated with activities involving the support of parents' (Costantoura, 2000: 90).

drama performances by students; joining a support group or committee; and/or giving moral support.

At All Saints College, parental support played a vital role in whether students chose the subject from junior into senior year. Karen (HOD, All Saints College) stated that they were 'very aware of the fundamentally academic outcomes which are very important' and they were 'really onto you if they are not comfortable with how the students are progressing' (Appendix A: 3, lines 636 - 640). She however viewed such parental interest in the subject as positive.

The three schools studied had parent support groups for the various extra-curricular activities in the arts. Additionally, a support group of parents had been specially set up for the school musical this year at Springvale State High School. Some of these parents also directly contributed their relevant expertise in the production where possible. As well, Jenny (Specialist Drama Teacher, Blessed Heart College) shared that parents would always step forward to help when requested and their support for drama came mainly from their children who discussed it at home in a positive light. She also received moral support from parents when she met them through the reinforcement of the positive experiences their children were having in the classroom.

Trained Drama Teachers

The fieldwork discovered that prospective drama teachers either underwent an undergraduate degree program in drama and education, or drama with a diploma in

teaching. These programs were offered at a few tertiary institutions in Queensland where demand was high. Formal training in drama as well as education ensured that these future teachers would be well-versed in the dramatic form and history, as well as classroom practice and working with young people. This helped to guarantee aesthetic learning experiences in the classroom.

However, the fieldwork also revealed that in-depth training for prospective teachers in drama only applied to teachers who were training to teach Secondary Drama. Teachers at the primary level were generalist teachers who did not have the option of taking drama as a full-fledged subject at the tertiary level. Therefore, their training in drama was not as thorough, and their confidence with the subject weaker. This will prove to be a challenge in light of the new *The Arts Years 1 – 10 Syllabus* as a mandated teaching requirement.

Support from the Professional Community

The study found that being part of a larger professional drama in education community helped educators feel supported in their roles in school. This was a combination of moral support, as well as tangible support such as sharing lesson plans, expertise, resources and classroom experiences.

Karen (HOD, All Saints College) attributed her high levels of energy and 'professional commitment' to good role models in the field who take her work seriously (Appendix A: 3, lines 758 -759). This gives her 'the feeling that you have to take the opportunity

to move forward and will be encouraged to take yourself and your work that seriously' (lines 761 – 763). It is why she is still actively involved in the wider drama in education community, and contributes back to its development.

Donna (HOD, Springvale State High School) appreciates and enjoys networking with the wider professional community. She sees it as a form of support; in terms of 'sharing resources and helping each other out', as well as 'positive ways of keeping the enthusiasm and passion going' (Appendix A: 2, lines 683 – 684 & 641 - 643).

The supportive environment in the wider drama in education community was experienced firsthand during the fieldwork at a Queensland Association of Drama in Education (QADIE) conference. An entry in the field log noted the high levels of moral support shown by the participants for each other:

> The atmosphere throughout was always full of energy and there were smiles and hugs everywhere. This was obviously a close-knit community where everybody knew at least someone else if not most of the people there. There was real warmth and support in the space and a sense that everyone was in it together.
>
> (field log entry, 2 May 2001)

Furthermore, many teachers were open and giving throughout the conference, as they shared their experiences and significant practice in their schools. Teachers who conducted workshop sessions gave out copies of their work programs, activities, and other material to all the participants at their session to study and use. Contacts made at the conference could be kept and relationships developed for further support in future.

These experiences reinforced the benefits of belonging to a wider drama in education community and the importance of the support structures that emerge.

To end, findings from the structural dimension revealed that philosophical support for drama in education seemed to be forthcoming. Educators understood the benefits of an aesthetic education, and arguments for incorporating drama into the curriculum were unnecessary. It was also found that while tangible support was mostly present, it varied across schools, where physical resources such as time and space provided challenges. The other challenge involved the training of drama teachers at the primary level, especially in light of the new arts syllabus completed this year.

The findings now turn to the curricular dimension.

The Curricular Dimension

The curricular dimension casts the investigative process onto the drama curriculum. It aims to understand how curriculum is planned, and what it encompasses[46].

Findings in this dimension from the fieldwork included drama curriculum at both primary and secondary levels providing students with an aesthetic education. It also found a collaborative approach towards planning drama curriculum at both the macro levels of the primary and secondary syllabus, as well as the school settings.

[46] A brief history of drama in education in Queensland extracted from an interview with Dr. Brad Haseman (Coordinator, Postgraduate Education and Research Training, Creative Industries Research and Applications Center, Queensland University of Technology) can be found at Appendix B: 9.

Other findings included a drama curriculum that involved artists teaching, and working with students in the classroom. Students were also involved in co-curricular activities that allowed them to watch, or participate in performances that furthered their learning experiences.

Finally, the fieldwork revealed a challenge for drama curriculum in Queensland in the area of integrating the use of technology. Although *The Arts Years 1 – 10 Syllabus* and the *Drama Senior Syllabus* both acknowledge its role, it was not yet actively integrated into the syllabus. Challenges pertaining to facilities, training and finding a working methodology still needed to be resolved.

An Aesthetic Education

The focus of the primary and secondary drama syllabus in Queensland is on providing an aesthetic education for students. This philosophy trickled down to the micro level of the school although the ability to articulate this mode of learning varied amongst the research participants. In a study conducted by MacDonald (1993) on creating aesthetic learning experiences in the classroom, she found that the teacher's perception of the aesthetic was an important factor in enabling aesthetic learning to occur.

The fieldwork revealed that teachers were experienced in using dramatic conventions and elements, and structured their lessons around the aesthetic fields of *forming*, *presenting* and *responding*. Both Jenny (Specialist Drama Teacher, Blessed Heart College) and Karen (HOD, All Saints College) were also able to articulate what

providing an aesthetic education meant, and entailed. Karen's response, 'linking the intellectual, cognitive to the affective or emotional intelligences' is characteristic of the type of responses received from these two teachers (Appendix A: 3, lines 156 – 157).

Collaborative Planning

The fieldwork conducted found that collaborative planning processes were present at both the macro level of the drama syllabi, as well as the micro level of the schools' work programs.

The Arts Years 1 – 10 Syllabus had an inclusive developmental process and the developers of the syllabus were proud of the fact that many people from diverse organizations contributed to its final outcome, making it well represented[47]. The *Drama Senior Syllabus* was developed by the Drama Sub-Committee at the Queensland Board of Senior Secondary School Studies (Q.B.S.S.S.S), a statutory body responsible for the development of syllabi in the post-compulsory years of schooling. The Drama Sub-Committee consists of teachers and academics, all involved in the field of drama.

[47] The process involved representatives of three school authorities in Queensland – Education Queensland, The Association of Independent Schools of Queensland Incorporated, and the Queensland Catholic Education Commission. As well, a syllabus advisory committee, a consultative network, parent organizations, unions and professional associations were included in the process. Furthermore, the draft syllabus was trialled by 12 schools, and subsequently piloted by 111 teachers in 36 schools across Queensland (Stinson, 1999: 7).

The collaborative nature of planning drama syllabi at the macro level ensured that curriculum is relevant, and broad-based. A similar style of planning was observed at the micro level of the school in two of the research settings.

Both Donna (HOD, Springvale State High School) and Karen (HOD, All Saints College) planned their work programs collaboratively with the rest of the drama staff. They also included students in this process through obtaining feedback on lesson plans and the overall program. Donna shared some of the questions she asked students were if 'what they did was of value to them?', and 'was it meaningful?' (Appendix A: 2, lines 178 – 180). Student responses were taken into consideration when planning other work programs.

This approach to planning at the micro level of the school ensured that work programs and lesson plans were relevant and interesting to students. Through exchanging ideas and sharing expertise, teachers could provide innovative and meaningful lessons for aesthetic learning in the classroom.

Artists-in-Residence

Fieldwork conducted also found that artists were invited into the school to conduct drama activities that complemented the curriculum. These residencies varied in duration; from one or several days, to several weeks.

Artists-in-residence helped to extend what students learnt in the classroom, and/or provided them with skills their teachers were unable to teach. Karen (HOD, All Saints College) shared that she invited artists to work with her students because she sees them as 'an enhancement of the curriculum process' (Appendix A: 3, lines 992 - 993). Therefore, she brings in artists who are not just 'different versions of me' but artists who can 'contribute a level of expertise the students can immediately appreciate' (lines 993 - 996). Working with artists-in-residence also afforded students opportunities to work with professional artists, thereby exposing them to the wider industry. It also provided them with unique learning experiences or as Karen stated, 'that lovely integrity you lose in classroom practice' (lines 1000 - 1001).

Finally, inviting artists into the school contributed towards maintaining the education-industry link where future artists are reached out to join the industry, and in turn, sustain the industry. It also gave artists opportunities to work with young people, and enabled them to 'appreciate my job more and therefore appreciate the potential of young people and drama in education' (Karen, Appendix A: 3, lines 1029 - 1031).

Technology

The Arts Years 1 – 10 Syllabus and the *Drama Senior Syllabus* both mention the role of technology. This supports the vision in *2010 Queensland State Education* which recognizes technology as a 'force for change' and its role in society (Education Queensland, 2000: 6). However, neither syllabi actively integrates technology into its philosophy or methodology.

Madonna Stinson, curriculum officer for *The Arts Years 1 – 10 Syllabus* stated, (interview, 10 May 2001) that technology is mentioned briefly in the syllabus to 'recognize its importance as a tool which facilitates the expression and communication of the art rather than a fundamental component of the artform'. There were also implementation issues to consider as not all schools have technological resources. Consequently, highlighting technology as part of the syllabus would make it mandatory which would be problematic for schools lacking the resources.

The fieldwork also unveiled that drama teachers were often not confident in using technology as they were not trained. Donna (HOD, Springvale State High School) stated that she is 'not very comfortable working with a lot of computerized equipment' although she acknowledged that it is a priority for her to learn more about technology (Appendix A: 2, lines 262 - 266). Karen (HOD, All Saints College) shared that the Performing Arts department has been utilizing the school's intranet system and other equipment to upload classroom and production experiences to the web for students to access. However, other technological integration would only take place when 'teachers' technical confidence grows' (Appendix A: 3, lines 534 - 535).

Donna acknowledged apprehension about the role technology played in society and is wary of it becoming the main tool in education, for fear of replacing the more sensory aspects of the arts. She stated:

> So I'm kind of caught in the middle because I want to do technology more; particularly in lighting and sound effects because we're kind of behind the eight ball at the moment but also wanting to nurture the students that it doesn't all have to be about technology and digital and CD-ROMs and video games and things. That you need to keep in touch with that ..... I call it the human spirit. Like your feelings and those sorts of things, and I think the ultimate would be to have a match with what's happening – new technology and your natural creativity.
>
> (Appendix A: 2, lines 284 - 293)

Therefore, it would appear a balance needs to be found as technology weaves its way into aesthetic learning experiences in the classroom.

Co-Curricular Activities

Besides the drama curriculum, the schools studied for the fieldwork also had co-curricular activities that substantiated the curriculum. These included inviting performances to be staged in school, theatre excursions, and performing to audiences within, and outside the school.

Students at Blessed Heart College had opportunities to watch performances staged at their school by professional artists[48]. These performances were beneficial as they extended drama work that was happening in the classroom. It also provided students with opportunities to watch a professional drama production. Additionally, performances were accompanied by Study Guides containing activities teachers could conduct with their students before, and after the performance. Finally, touring performances allowed teachers and students to come into contact with the wider

[48] These performances are provided by the Queensland Arts Council who have a selection of arts programs that tour schools at a minimal cost.

professional industry that could lead to future artists-in-residence programs with the school, and professional development opportunities for teachers.

Besides inviting performances to the school, students were also taken on excursions to watch performances at theatre venues[49]. These excursions helped complement the curriculum in providing students with opportunities to witness dramatic forms and conventions learnt in the classroom used by professional artists. It may have also enlarged their understanding of a particular text being studied. Watching a performance at a theatre venue also gave students an overall theatrical experience which was more difficult to create in schools due to the lack of facilities.

Opportunities were also provided for students to present their learning experiences, and skills learnt in the classroom to a wider audience. Students at both Springvale State High School and All Saints College often performed for the school community. These took place during assembly periods or lunch hour. They also performed during school events, as well as state events such as Education Week, conferences, and youth theatre festivals. Both schools also have a Drama Club where students can extend their drama experiences further and perform in school productions for the wider community. These opportunities of performing for an audience allowed students to garner audience responses, and contributed towards the evaluation of their work. It also gave students performing-related experiences and occasions to be seen as artists.

[49] The *Drama Senior Syllabus* recommends at least one field excursion per semester (Queensland Board of Senior Secondary School Studies, 2000: 16).

To end, amongst the findings in this dimension, a salient finding was the opportunities students were provided to extend their learning experiences beyond the core curriculum as they worked with artists, watched, and participated in performances. Experiences such as these transported students into the realm of identifying themselves as artists, thereby increasing the value of their work. It also demonstrates the school's commitment to drama and its potential as a vocation for students.

The reporting now shifts to the pedagogical dimension.

The Pedagogical Dimension

This section on the reporting of the fieldwork aims to understand the characteristics, and attitudes of the teachers studied leading toward an effective drama in education practice.

The findings revealed that teachers had a passion for the arts that extended beyond their role in the school, and was a strong driving force in their work. Their pedagogy aimed to provide students with a nurturing, and empowering education through drama.

Findings also included the support structures provided by other teachers within, and outside the school to be important to a teacher's practice. Finally, the teachers studied took professional development seriously, with attempts made to develop themselves further through participating in the wider professional community, and/or through efforts at the school level.

A Passion for The Arts

An obvious finding from the fieldwork was the love of the arts all three teachers had. They were artists in addition to being teachers. This passion for the arts was an important motivating factor in their work.

Donna (HOD, Springvale State High School) stated, 'I've always loved performing, so my passions in life are live theatre, music and drawing' (Appendix A: 2, lines 53 - 54). Amongst other things stuck on Donna's wall in her office is an article on *How To Be An Artist.* Both Karen (HOD, All Saints College) and Jenny's (Specialist Drama Teacher, Blessed Heart College) experiences as artists with youth theatre companies encouraged them to become teachers. Karen shared that she 'enjoyed generating a love of the arts on many levels not only through performance' but also by 'building community through the arts' (Appendix A: 3, lines 9 - 11).

These teachers' love of the arts and teaching has led them to see their vocation as more of a passion than a job. Karen (HOD, All Saints College) stated that she and her faculty 'all love the arts; we all have arts-based lives and we all want to keep making that our lives and not just a job. It's a passion' (Appendix A: 3, lines 765 - 767). This attitude was reflected around Karen's work area which was covered entirely with cards, photos, student work, and other material related to drama, and previous productions she had been involved in.

A Nurturing and Empowering Pedagogy

Findings revealed that the philosophy of the teachers studied was to nurture, and provide an empowering pedagogy for their students. This was congruent with the aims of drama in education, and the school discussed under the intentional dimension. Findings fell into three main categories: providing life-skills; values and moral education; and an aesthetic education.

Donna (HOD, Springvale State High School) stated that her 'philosophy for teaching is to nurture students in whatever way I can' and to 'prepare them for life' (Appendix A: 2, lines 540 – 542). She felt that she had to instill in her students 'a certain level of skills' (lines 545 – 547) by the time they graduated and viewed herself as a 'role model in imparting life-skills' (lines 553 - 555).

The teachers also felt that drama in education contributed towards providing students with an education in personal values. Karen (HOD, All Saints College) stated that 'drama is the only subject for a lot of students where they examine themselves in their wider context' (Appendix A: 3, lines 90 - 91). Students are therefore given opportunities to critically examine, and rehearse for life. Edmiston (1995: 116) believes that drama in education should be concerned with providing an 'ethical' education for students. He states that 'as drama educators we are always concerned with relationships among people' and are therefore 'moral educators' (ibid). Therefore, teachers should allow students to challenge, and explore their own values and morals through drama; informing their identity.

Finally, empowerment also arises by providing an education that places equal importance on the cognitive as well as affective states in learning. The provision of an aesthetic education formed the basis of the drama curriculum in schools and required 'teachers to challenge students to look at what it means to be engaged with both your cognitive and emotional intelligence to create art' (Karen, Appendix A: 3, lines 140 - 142).

Working as A Team

Another finding in the pedagogical dimension was the benefits of working together as a team of teachers. This allowed teachers to draw on each other's strengths to plan curriculum, problem-solve and evaluate practice.

As Head of Departments, both Donna (Springvale State High School) and Karen (All Saints College) managed a faculty of teachers. They acknowledged the merits of collaborating with a team of teachers, and encouraged this support structure. Donna has eleven staff under her management and they 'vary in personality, in professional background, in age, in knowledge and content so a lot of sharing happens, across faculties as well' (Appendix A: 2, lines 337 - 339). She acknowledged that their differences made it harder to work together occasionally but it also provided them with different perspectives to a problem. Donna shared that her staff planned the drama curriculum together but felt they needed to collaborate more in the areas of teaching; team teaching and evaluating each other's classroom practice.

Karen (HOD, All Saints College) managed nine staff whom she viewed as professionals. Her philosophy was to 'try not to be intrusive or directorial in my role' and instead developed 'constant communication' as a team through weekly group or individual meetings (Appendix A: 3, lines 236 – 240). This was to ensure her staff felt that they had 'professional support' (lines 240 - 241). Creating such an environment enabled 'a very collegial attitude towards planning' which Karen felt was 'really important' (lines 246 - 250). It also encouraged staff to approach her with work-related problems, and allowed teachers to be comfortable with evaluating each other's classroom practice.

The importance of working closely with a team of teachers was exemplified by Jenny's (Specialist Drama Teacher) experience at Blessed Heart College. As the only drama teacher at the college, Jenny worked alone. This proved to be a handicap when planning different units of work for various year levels that attempted to incorporate content from other subjects. Jenny stated that, 'my head got muddled' and had to proceed with planning with her own content ideas (Appendix A: 1, lines 443 – 445). This was unfortunate and prevented students from making links across content areas, thereby gaining a more holistic learning experience.

Networking

The fieldwork found that maintaining links with the wider professional community was important to the teachers studied. This process of networking provided them with a support structure both psychologically and tangibly. Networking allowed teachers to

stay in touch with the wider professional drama in education field, and drama industry. It also provided them with opportunities to extend their own practice beyond the school[50].

Donna (HOD, Springvale State High School) felt it was important to 'be seen and heard' and 'to be part of a group' (Appendix A: 2, lines 678 - 679). This led to the sharing of resources between schools such as lesson plans, ideas, and training for students. It also sometimes resulted in a more economical use of monetary resources.

Networking was an important way for Karen (HOD, All Saints College) to keep in touch with the wider drama in education field and theatre industry. It allowed her opportunities to extend her practice outside of the school, and form partnerships with other artists. Karen commented that she would be professionally 'bored silly if all the performance work the students were involved with was institutionalized or school based' (Appendix A: 3, lines 735 - 737). Working with other artists also allowed her to make informed choices for artist-in-residence experiences for her students. These opportunities were further used to benchmark her students' work to the professional industry standard, through which the quality of the school's drama program was gauged. The process of networking was also found to provide teachers opportunities to 'keep meeting people who might employ our students', therefore enabling the school to sustain students into the industry (Karen, Appendix A: 3, lines 737 – 738).

[50] Opportunities to network presented themselves when teachers pursued professional development. Other instances included Head of Department cluster meetings between different schools. There were also informal means of networking such as reading, and contributing to newsletters circulated by Education Queensland, the teacher's unions, as well as drama in education journals. As well, each state funded school had a website hosted by Education Queensland where they could update information and resources electronically, providing another opportunity for schools to network.

Professional Development

The teachers interviewed during the fieldwork were all conscious of the need for professional development to ensure their pedagogy continued to be relevant, and their practice effective. Professional development could occur within the school setting, and/or participating in the wider professional community.

Donna (HOD, Springvale State High School) believed in the importance of professional development because 'things (were) moving so fast', referring to the revised drama syllabus, advancements in technology, and changes in educational philosophy (Appendix A: 2, lines 626 - 628).

Karen (HOD, All Saints College) was pro-active about professional development and looked for these opportunities for her staff outside the school setting. She encouraged them to professionally develop by attending sessions with them, or helping to organize it. However, professional development did not necessarily have to be formalized and could transpire within the school. This was through professional information sharing, creating resource files with a lot of professional reading, and ensuring the existence of an extensive resource library for teachers to access for their own development.

Additionally, pre-service teacher mentoring provided existing teachers with opportunities to professionally develop. Pre-service teachers attached to the school were able to share the latest in drama theory and pedagogy with teachers within the school; through their training at a tertiary institution. Donna shared that the current

pre-service teacher she was mentoring taught her a lot about the use of technology, and has given her 'new games to play with the drama students' (Appendix A: 2, lines 612 - 614).

To end, amongst the findings in the pedagogical dimension, the most salient was the amount of passion teachers had for the arts that extended beyond their jobs. This passion provided the motivation behind their work, where they regarded themselves as artists as well as teachers. McLean (1999: 5), in a paper delivered to drama educationists in Australia on drama in education in the 21st century, advocates for the importance of the teacher-artist, 'a new role in the theatre/education mix'. The teacher-artist is an important person in the quest to privilege young people's voices, and to create valuable works of art that are relevant to young people (ibid: 8). Therefore, she states that teachers should engage in art-making and continue to develop their artistic selves. This will not only improve their own teaching practice and students' learning, but also contribute towards producing important and credible children and young people's dramatic work in the wider theatre industry.

The findings now turn to the last dimension in 'the ecology of schooling', the evaluative dimension.

The Evaluative Dimension

The evaluative dimension is concerned with the aims and processes of assessment in a school setting.

The fieldwork found that assessment was an important component in the settings studied. It found that there were three main areas of assessment within the schools: student assessment, drama program evaluation, and teacher evaluation. Assessment helped to guarantee that student learning was taking place at an optimum, and provided tangible evidence that they were experiencing an aesthetic education.

Purposes of Student Assessment

The fieldwork conducted in the three research settings found that student assessment fulfilled three main purposes: diagnostic, formative and summative.

Assessment was an integral component of the drama programs in the schools studied. It allowed teachers to make judgments on students' learning progress, and therefore identify problems and strategies to assist in student learning. Conducting assessments over the course of the study also allowed teachers to inform students and their parents on their progress so that they would be able to monitor their learning, and adopt appropriate strategies to meet targeted outcomes. Finally, assessment played a role in the larger education system when it was used to determine the next level of study, and whether students were suited to continue pursuing drama. It provided teachers, students, and parents the opportunity to make judgments on overall student learning and achievements, and contributed to decisions on future learning directions. It also allowed education authorities to monitor the standard and quality of drama programs in schools in Queensland.

Student Assessment

Drama students in the three schools studied were assessed according to the requirements and procedures outlined in *The Arts Years 1 – 10 Syllabus* (2001), and the *Drama Senior Syllabus* (2000) respectively.

This involved using the aesthetic fields of *forming*, *presenting* and *responding* as the three main assessment categories. Students were assessed on their ability to understand and use dramatic conventions and forms to create dramatic works. They were also evaluated as to whether they could analyze and critique dramatic processes and works, and provide their own interpretations.

It was found that student assessment at both the primary and secondary levels involved a clear and focused process where both teachers and students were aware of what was being assessed, and the behaviors expected[51]. Additionally, assessment occurred processually over the course of study, thereby fulfilling the diagnostic aims of assessment. This acknowledged that students' needs were not constant, and that learning was a dynamic process. Evidence of learning was collected and stored in individual student folios, and accessed by teachers whenever judgments on learning

[51] At the primary level, this was reflected in an outcomes-based education where successful learning was described in terms of behavioral outcomes. These outcomes described what students 'should know and be able to do' (Queensland School Curriculum Council, 2001: 44). These were expressed as statements at the different levels of schooling. At the secondary level, these expectations were reflected in a task sheet given to students for each assessment. An assessment schema was also developed to scope student behaviors expected during assessment. This provided teachers with detailed descriptions of possible behavioral outcomes, and assisted in making judgments.

were made. This process of collecting evidence on student learning was a systematic process in order for findings to be meaningful and thorough.

The fieldwork further revealed that student assessments in drama were fair. It found that assessment influenced planning of the drama curriculum. This was to ensure that students were only being assessed for what was taught. Assessment was also fair as teachers had to use a range of assessment techniques, and contexts when collecting evidence on learning. This ensured an equitable curriculum that took into consideration different types of learners. Furthermore, it was also found that the assessment process at the end of Year 12 involved not only the judgments made by the teacher, but also the Queensland Board of Senior Secondary School Studies (Q.B.S.S.S.S.). The provision of an independent body of assessors ensured that students were being fairly assessed. Their work was also compared to students from all the other schools in Queensland to ensure that judgments made by individual teachers across schools were consistent and fair.

Drama Program Evaluation

Besides assessing student learning in the drama program, teachers were also interested in evaluating the quality of the drama program itself.

The fieldwork found that students in the schools studied were asked for feedback on the drama program they were experiencing. This could be in the form of informal evaluations such as classroom discussions, or discussions with particular students; or

formal evaluations. Karen (HOD, All Saints College) shared that she occasionally organizes formal evaluations on the drama program between her staff and students. This was usually done with students who were choosing subjects for the following year, and provided them with opportunities to discuss the drama program. It also enabled drama staff to ensure their subject continued to be relevant and accessible to students.

Another indicator whether a drama program was successful was through gauging the responses from other students in the school, as well as parents. Karen stated that positive experiences and work in the drama classroom is usually 'spread by word of mouth' and would come back to her (Appendix A: 3, lines 685 - 686). Parents at All Saints College were also 'conscious of the curriculum' and would inform Karen if they felt the quality of the drama program was declining (lines 636 -639).

The fieldwork also discovered that at the secondary level, the drama work programs of all schools had to be submitted to the Q.B.S.S.S.S. for verification and approval. This helped ensure that the standard and quality of drama programs in Queensland were consistently high.

Teacher Evaluation

Research in the field found that the teachers studied reflected on their practice in a variety of ways: through other teachers; students; and the wider professional

community. This enabled them to continue providing effective and impactful classroom practice.

Both Donna (Springvale State High School) and Karen (All Saints College) as Heads of Departments are responsible for teacher observations within their faculty. However, they are open to teachers observing their practice as well, and providing feedback. They both also utilize pre-service teachers attached to them to gather responses to their classroom practice.

On top of teacher evaluations, Karen (HOD, All Saints College) also 'tests' her own practice by gathering students' feedback (Appendix A: 3, lines 1154 – 1155). Donna (HOD, Springvale State High School) shared that the school often had a lot of graduating students returning to thank the teachers for their schooling experiences, and to keep in touch. This could be another measure of successful teaching.

Finally, participating in the wider professional community enabled teachers to evaluate the standard and quality of their practice against other teachers. This was through 'being connected closely to other teachers professionally, seeing their students' work, discussing approaches to work with them, (and) connecting with other work programs' (Karen, Appendix A: 3, lines 1130 - 1132). Karen also used a 'vocational dimension' to assess how successful she was as a teacher by examining the number of students that joined the arts industry after they graduated (ibid: 69 – 73).

To end, the most meaningful finding in this dimension was the thoroughness involved in student assessment. Assessments were relevant, useful and fair. They were focused on aesthetic learning and therefore supported the aims of drama syllabi. Moreover, there was a system of checks and balances built into the assessment process to ensure that judgments made were weighted and accurate. This was seen especially at the secondary level where the Q.B.S.S.S.S. was involved as an independent assessment body. The findings therefore demonstrate the commitment schools had to the assessment process, and the importance of its outcomes in helping to maintain the integrity of drama as a subject. It also ensured a high quality of artists produced.

Conclusion

To conclude this chapter, the findings in Brisbane, Australia have shown that a Socratic education as outlined by Abbs (1994) is being provided for students in the schools studied. This has been possible because of the philosophical and tangible support given by Education Queensland, as well as support from educators and artists.

The findings in the various dimensions demonstrate that young Queenslanders will achieve the goals set in *2010 Queensland State Education* (2000) – life-long learners who are aware of their cultural heritage and environment yet attuned to the world, adaptable and well-skilled people for the workforce with high inter-personal and intra-personal skills, creative and critical thinkers, and Australians who will contribute towards the development and growth of the country.

However, there are some challenges presented in this journey. The study, *Australians and The Arts* revealed that 'the vast majority of people would feel more positive about the arts if there were "better education and opportunities for kids in the arts"' (Costantoura, 2000: 86). Another related finding expressed the need for the arts sector 'to work with teachers and students to generate more effective education and opportunities for children in the arts' (ibid). Therefore, more still needs to be done in bringing aesthetic learning experiences to young Queenslanders.

Perhaps the introduction of *The Arts Years 1 – 10 Syllabus* will address the above concerns somewhat. However, primary school teachers would need to be trained in the arts beforehand. Other challenges facing drama in education demonstrated by findings from the fieldwork include planning for sufficient suitable spaces, allocating sufficient time in the time-table, and integrating the role of technology into the curriculum.

The study now turns to findings from the fieldwork in Singapore.

5

DRAMA IN EDUCATION PRACTICE IN SINGAPORE

This chapter shifts the focus on the reporting of research findings to Singapore. It seeks to discuss the current state of drama in education in Singapore schools. This is done using similar organizational dimensions in the previous chapter – the Intentional, Structural, Curricular, Pedagogical and Evaluative dimensions.

The fieldwork for this chapter focused largely on the drama in education program, *Development Through Drama* conducted by artists from The Necessary Stage at two of the research settings - Mayflower Primary School and Orchid Secondary School. Findings from the third research setting, Merlion Secondary School are reported where relevant.

An introduction to the *Development Through Drama* program can be found at Appendix B: 10, and should be read before the reporting of findings in this chapter.

The Intentional Dimension

The Intentional Dimension is interested in examining the aims of drama in education in the research settings.

Research undertaken for the study in Singapore found state education policy to be an influential factor in determining school, and program aims in all the settings. The aims

of drama in education in all three schools researched were personal development focused and initiated to help students develop life-skills. Thus, learning took place mostly *through* drama versus *in* drama. Out of the three schools, only one school studied was investigating into offering drama as a subject in its own right in the curriculum. Another aim of incorporating drama into curriculum time in all the schools studied was its contribution towards English language learning. As a result, drama in education programs were conducted using English periods. One school had also made drama evaluations part of the English language exams.

Findings in this dimension are reported by research settings.

Mayflower Primary School

The Necessary Stage piloted *Development Through Drama* at Mayflower Primary School. The program was initiated, and developed at the request of the school principal who felt that learning through drama would contribute towards the aims of the school. These aims drew from larger state education policy and strived to provide 'a balanced, holistic education for our children' which involved the 'physical, social, academic, and cultural' aspects of education (School prospectus, 2001). *Development Through Drama* is one out of a range of enrichment programs provided for students to supplement the core curriculum. These programs were given due importance by being placed during curriculum time.

Another reason why students at Mayflower Primary experienced drama in the curriculum stemmed from the Principal's belief in Gardner's theory of Multiple Intelligences (The Necessary Stage, 2000: 26). The belief that every student has different types of intelligences that need to be identified and nurtured has led to all students in the first and second years of schooling (7 – 8 years old) developing their linguistic, interpersonal and intrapersonal intelligences through drama[52]. However, because the Principal wanted to 'ensure equal opportunity for all pupils to experience at least six of the intelligences', this meant that the focus of enrichment programs at the other levels of schooling shifted away from drama to other areas (ibid: 26). Thus, students' exposure to drama was short-lived, with those interested in pursuing it further having to do so through a Co-Curricular Activity conducted after-school hours.

Orchid Secondary School

The Necessary Stage was invited by the former principal at Orchid Secondary School in 2000 to conduct *Development Through Drama* for a group of Secondary One students, over a period of two years (a total of 36 hours). The program sought to instill confidence in students who were identified as academically weak. These students generally had low self-esteem and learning difficulties. The Principal hoped that by providing an alternative to the normal cognitive-based classroom, and the development of life-skills would result in motivated students. Furthermore, it was believed that learning through drama would help in English language learning which was a problem with the students identified.

[52] *Development Through Drama* offered at Primary 2 catered mainly to the latter two intelligences whilst a Speech and Drama program conducted by another company focused more on the former.

Orchid Secondary School subsequently decided to make student evaluations from the drama program a part of the English language exams. The school's intention was to provide students who were weak in written English an opportunity to pass the subject if their oracy component was strong. This move was viewed positively by TNS as it raised the status of the drama program within the school. However, it also proved problematic as it confused teachers about the real aims of the program. This was exemplified during evaluation meetings with the school where teachers asked for more written exercises.

Merlion Secondary School

Merlion Secondary School is one of the few schools in Singapore that has a full-time drama teacher. Jessie (Drama Teacher) shared that the school had no intention of incorporating drama into the curriculum when she was hired. It was only at her request that the principal agreed to include it for the lower secondary (13 – 14 years old) students, in 2000.

The aims of drama in education at Merlion Secondary were similar to the *Development Through Drama* program. They were personal development focused and conducted using English periods. Incorporating drama in the curriculum supported Merlion Secondary's aim of ensuring 'the environment is a nurturing one that allows students to find their own space and develop their potential in areas that go beyond the academic' (School prospectus, 2001). This stemmed from their belief that all their students 'can succeed', 'are gifted in different ways' and 'unique in their own way' (ibid). Drama in

education also contributed towards the school's vision for their students who are described as having 'character, confidence and creativity' (ibid).

Drama subsequently became a niche area at Merlion Secondary School, and the Drama Club a popular Co-Curricular Activity. The school is also exploring expanding the scope of drama programs offered during curriculum time using artists-in-residence, as well as looking into the feasibility of offering drama as an elective for the General Cambridge School Examination (GCSE) 'O' Level exams in the upper secondary levels.

To end, the schools studied in Singapore seemed to be more concerned with students' social, rather than aesthetic development. This was despite the fact that state education policy highlighted that education involved developing the child morally, intellectually, physically, socially and aesthetically' (MOE, 2000,http://www1.moe.edu.sg/ desired.htm). Schools perhaps assumed that students would automatically be learning aesthetically when learning through drama and therefore subsumed it under the socially-oriented aims of the respective drama programs. As well, it seemed that drama was not yet considered important enough to be provided for students at all levels. It also did not deserve periods of its own where its place in the curriculum had to be justified using English periods. This sometimes caused conflicts between artists conducting the drama program, and the English language teachers.

The Structural Dimension

This dimension under the research conducted in Singapore looked at the necessary structures that need to be in place to facilitate drama in education in schools. It found that drama in education programs were either conducted by drama teachers within the school, or artists-in-residence. Both types of educators needed similar support structures in order to facilitate effective drama in education programs.

Findings in this dimension are largely congruent with findings in Brisbane. They include the importance of the philosophical and tangible support of the Principal for drama in education in order for programs to be successful. The necessity for spaces to be of a suitable size and evocative in nature was also reinforced from the findings in two out of the three research settings.

As well, it was found that students in the schools studied were disadvantaged because of the insufficient amount of time devoted to drama in the curriculum. Lessons were only about 45 minutes, and once a week for a period of ten, to thirty weeks being the maximum. A survey conducted with students from Orchid Secondary at the end of an 18-week program found that students 'disliked the short hours' of the program, and 'doing the play without much rehearsal', referring to the short amount of time they had to rehearse for their in-class presentations (student survey, 10 October 2000). Both students and artists often felt rushed for time during the program even though the aim was to allow students to learn through drama process. Moreover, a lack of continuity of offering drama through the schooling levels prevented students of opportunities to

extend their drama skills and experiences. This was unfortunate especially for students who excelled at drama and who wanted to pursue it seriously.

Another hurdle to drama in education was the lack of trained artists in drama pedagogy, and the lack of trained teachers in drama. The latter meant that schools interested in drama in education had to turn to artists to conduct the programs. However, there was simultaneously a shortage of artists to choose from to conduct drama programs that were pedagogically sound. Therefore, some schools had to be turned away due to the inability to find suitable artists. Additionally, in schools that had drama during curriculum time, a less than ideal ratio of students to artist in the classroom was found; twenty to one being the norm.

In the research settings studied, even though some of the artists were adequately trained in drama pedagogy, or had accrued enough classroom experience, working with teachers who had no experience with drama was frustrating. Artists in these schools had to constantly educate teachers on drama methodology and processes, as well as educational versus performance-based outcomes. As well, collaborative partnerships with teachers were never realized due to the teachers' lack of training and therefore inability to participate actively in the planning and evaluating process. Some teachers were also not interested in drama in education.

The fieldwork also found that working with artists had limitations. As they worked freelance, their commitment was often shared amongst several projects. This affected the amount of time and focus they could spend on a particular school. Scheduling also

proved difficult. As well, many freelance artists disliked committing to projects of a long duration, such as the *Development Through Drama* program. Lastly, the drama in education market in Singapore is a competitive one amongst companies, especially given the limited number of trained artists. This has a double impact upon the total number of available artists to choose from as companies are sometimes concerned with artists sharing lesson plans, and practice with other companies.

These findings point to the need for drama programs to be conducted by trained teachers if they are to be offered to more students in more schools, and if they are to be sustained. The model adopted in Brisbane seems most ideal whereby drama teachers are responsible for imparting most of the curriculum, complemented by artists-in-residence who contribute skills and experiences in addition to the teacher.

The Curricular Dimension

This dimension examines the drama curriculum being conducted in schools. It is interested in the aims and outcomes of the curriculum, and how it is planned.

As drama was not a core curriculum subject at the primary and secondary levels in Singapore, there was no formal drama syllabus. Consequently, schools interested in drama had to devise their own curriculum. The fieldwork focused on the *Development Through Drama* program conducted by TNS during curriculum time in schools.

A salient finding in this dimension was the lack of a curriculum that focused on aesthetic learning. The *Development Through Drama* program was focused on developing life-skills and not on imparting dramatic skills to students. Thus, even though students' 'grounded aesthetic' (Willis, 1990: 1) was actively employed in the classroom, the absence of the 'conservationist aesthetic' (Abbs, 1987: 4) meant that students were unable to execute dramatic presentations well. This sometimes had negative consequences upon their confidence levels, and also meant that aesthetic learning was largely lacking in the classroom.

Furthermore, the curriculum was found to be loosely structured, where the aims and outcomes of the program were not sufficiently scoped, sequenced and unpacked. There often was a lack of strong content choices in the work that challenged students. As well, insufficient evocative or 'aesthetically-charged' materials were introduced in the classroom to stimulate students' imagination, and cognitive and affective processes (MacDonald, 1993: 86). As a result, students were often expected to devise and create pieces of work based on their own experiences. This was sometimes difficult without strong starting points, and where their experiences were sometimes limited. Consequently, classroom presentations were often shallow.

Findings in this dimension therefore reinforce the importance of learning *in* drama; imparting dramatic skills and forms to students, along with opportunities for them to contribute to lesson content from their immediate culture.

The Pedagogical Dimension

The pedagogical dimension focuses on the teacher or artist in the classroom. It is interested in drama practice, and the attitudes that inform it.

The fieldwork discovered that artists and teachers in Singapore viewed drama in education as an opportunity to empower students. This was through connecting students with their affective domain, and enabling them to be critically conscious of themselves and the world around them, in order to develop their 'voice'. This was largely congruent with the aims of the drama programmes although challenges as outlined in the Structural and Curricular dimensions often hampered their efforts.

Ruth (Artist, Mayflower Primary School) believed that drama empowers by offering students an education that deals with feelings and emotions. It develops students' 'emotional intelligence in an experiential manner' which was currently not offered in the core curriculum in Singapore schools (Appendix A: 4, lines 95 - 97). She felt that the academic-based subjects only stressed the importance of using the brain, whereas 'in drama you engage your mind, emotions and your body' (lines 101 - 102). Furthermore, the physicality of drama that interacts with mental processes results in the unique learning nature of drama. It also involves the senses and 'comes straight from your gut, your instincts' (lines 103 - 104). Ruth explained that this was the reason why drama is 'so affecting' and powerful, because 'not just the mental but your whole presence is needed' (lines 109 - 110).

Jessie (Drama Teacher, Merlion Secondary School), like Ruth felt that education in Singapore discouraged emoting. She believed that while her students felt a lot, they lacked the courage to express their feelings, or did not know how. She realized this was because 'they are not trained' to do so (Appendix A: 5, lines 169 - 172). Drama, on the other hand gave students opportunities to express these emotions. It also provided a structure to handle the emotions effectively and 'channel them somewhere' (lines 178 - 179). This prevented students from being overly emotional, but to instead understand and harness these emotions to produce constructive learning experiences.

In addition, drama was thought to empower students with a 'voice'. It was agreed that most students in the Singapore school system were not taught how to think critically, and lacked the skills, as well as opportunities to express themselves. Furthermore, learning in schools was still largely teacher-directed and centered. Drama therefore provided students with opportunities, and a form to express their thoughts and feelings. They were required to be critical of content introduced in the classroom, as well as form individual responses. Jessie (Drama Teacher, Merlion Secondary School) shared how she was empowered by her own experiences with drama:

> I'm speaking from experience. Drama's role in my life was one of empowerment. It allowed me to see that there is a world beyond myself, and it gave me an opportunity to participate in this world. It is the empowerment of a voice, of my voice.
>
> (Appendix A: 5, lines 76 - 79)

As a result, Jessie aimed to help her students find their own voices, and to use them. She believed that drama draws students into 'a world where you are experimenting with your imagination' in a 'safe and secure space'. It allows students to think and say

'things that are taboo' (lines 110 - 113). As a result, students are encouraged to think critically. They are also allowed opportunities to explore and enact multiple perspectives. This, together with 'tools for reflection' introduced into the classroom ensured students were 'better able to make sense of what is going on' in drama (lines 119 - 121). Students who are empowered would be confident of themselves and their identities, and would want to express their voice, and be heard.

Finally, it was felt that while artists and teachers sought to encourage students to think critically, they were sometimes hampered by the fear of offending the school, and implicating themselves. As a result, some potentially sensitive topics such as race relations were avoided in the classroom. The fear of being offensive also stemmed from the system of governance in Singapore which adopted a harsh stance towards criticism of its philosophy and policies. As a result, critically examining and discussing policies in Singapore in the classroom was still difficult for many teachers and artists. Unfortunately, this placed an invisible boundary around content areas and their potential to provide empowering experiences in the classroom.

The Evaluative Dimension

This final dimension in 'the ecology of schooling' examines how assessment takes place in the school. This is with regards to drama in education and takes into account student, teacher/artist, and program evaluations. It is also interested in the aims of

assessment and what are the implications of the various findings. The fieldwork in this dimension focused on the *Development Through Drama* program[53].

It was found that student assessment focused largely on diagnostic and formative aims. The evaluation of students helped artists conducting the program to devise teaching strategies, and to monitor student development. Student evaluations also enabled artists and teachers to assess whether program aims were being met, and subsequently the effectiveness of the program. Only one out of the three schools studied had a summative aim towards student assessment whereby marks were assigned and incorporated with English language.

The fieldwork discovered that while efforts were made to assess student learning processually, assessment objectives and procedures were unclear. There was a lack of well-defined assessment criteria that was sufficiently unpacked, and related back to the aims of the program. Assessment schemas were also absent. Furthermore, there were no clear junctures for student evaluation during the program, which may have resulted in uneven student evaluations. This could have affected the meaningfulness of judgments made.

As well, the lack of focus on aesthetic learning with the presence of the 'conservationist aesthetic' or the learning of dramatic skills proved challenging to the assessment process. It was difficult to assess personal development outcomes as they lacked distinct forms. Other challenges to student assessment included the large

[53] Criteria for student assessment for the *Development Through Drama* program at Mayflower Primary School and Orchid Secondary School can be found at Appendix B: 11.

number of twenty students in each class, and the short interaction time of an hour a week making it difficult for artists to conduct meaningful evaluations.

In the area of artist and program evaluation, the fieldwork found that regular feedback was given to artists based on classroom observations made by staff from TNS. Feedback was also sought from teachers who judged the effectiveness of the artists from the attitudes and behaviors of their students. Similarly, evaluation of the *Development Through Drama* program was derived from classroom observations, and artist and teacher feedback. Unfortunately, feedback from students which would have added a valuable dimension to the assessment process was not sought in all schools.

Conclusion

To end, although the fieldwork found that schools in Singapore were focusing on providing a holistic education for students, aesthetic aims were still lacking. The emphasis for drama programs was on personal development, and imparting life-skills to students. Besides depriving young Singaporeans of aesthetic learning experiences, the lack of aesthetic aims affected curriculum planning and evaluation. It also impacted upon the quality of work produced by the students.

Finally, the fieldwork highlighted the urgent need for trained artists and teachers in drama in education if more students were to benefit from a Socratic education.

Findings from this chapter, as well as chapter four will be reiterated, and integrated with the literature earlier reviewed in the next chapter. This final chapter will contain overall conclusions as well as recommendations for drama in education in Singapore.

6

THE WAY FORWARD: RECOMMENDATIONS FOR DRAMA IN EDUCATION IN SINGAPORE

> ... if the school is to be successful, it must offer *more* than critical analysis. It must offer also forms of ritual and creative symbolism. It must attempt to create a living culture in which the young can participate and develop as responsive and responsible individuals within an encompassing community.
>
> (Abbs, 1979: 85)

This study has shown the significance and importance of providing a Socratic education for all students in the Literature Review. It further demonstrated that this was congruent with the present direction, and aims of education in Singapore although in reality, was largely still lacking in school practices.

The fieldwork conducted in both Brisbane and Singapore found that education in both countries shared similar broad aims: to develop the individual potential of students by providing an ability-driven, learner-centered education; to enable students to be critical thinkers and life-long learners; and to provide a holistic education. However, while the schools and curriculum studied in Brisbane seemed to be achieving their aims in the area of drama in education, it was not the case in Singapore. This was due to a combination of factors such as the lack of training in drama and drama pedagogy, a lack of understanding of what an aesthetic education entailed, prizing other areas of student development over aesthetic development, lack of structural support for drama, and the lack of opportunities for all students in Singapore to experience an in-depth aesthetic education.

This chapter will reiterate the need for schools in Singapore to provide a Socratic education through harnessing a constructivist and critical pedagogy, and allowing students to learn aesthetically. It will use, and synthesize findings across the organizational dimensions utilized earlier in chapters four and five to support arguments discussed in the Literature Review, in order to make recommendations for drama in education in Singapore.

Harnessing A Critical and Constructivist Pedagogy

One of the components of providing a Socratic education for students is harnessing a critical and constructivist pedagogy. This will empower teachers to make schools in Singapore 'crucibles for questioning and learning' (Ministry of Education, 2000: 30).

However, in order to engage this pedagogy effectively, teacher training that embraces this methodology is necessary especially since these are relatively new paradigms being advocated in Singapore schools. It was until recently that the learning of prepositional knowledge still dominated education. Additionally, the history of the system of governance in Singapore discouraged critical thinking in its citizens, and conformity was encouraged and rewarded. Therefore, the government must be supportive by allowing critical dialogue and exploration to take place, resulting in new knowledge constructions. This however has to be more than just 'thinking skills' and involves the examination of the 'social function of particular forms of knowledge' (McLaren, 1989: 161).

Consequently, teachers, artists and students must feel sufficiently secure to examine difficult, and sensitive issues in the classroom without the fear of censorship, rebuke or punishment. It is then that creativity and innovation can occur as 'reflectiveness' is the first step in the creative process (Feldman, Csikszentmihalyi & Gardner, 1994: 32). It is also an important skill in a knowledge-based economy where information is made easily accessible with technology. Students need to be taught how to handle information, and use it meaningfully and responsibly. Equipping students with critical thinking skills will 'prepare our youth to be discerning and astute users of information and innovative creators of knowledge' (Ministry of Education, 2000: 19).

Simultaneously, knowledge should not be rarified. Instead, students should learn, and be encouraged to create and construct meaning, and new knowledge for themselves. In 'an uncertain future' (ibid: 61), education should foster the 'appreciation for a multiplicity of truths and options', so that students will be equipped to deal with problems and challenges that are 'rarely unidimensional' (Brooks & Brooks, 1993: 111).

Adopting a critical and constructivist pedagogy in the classroom would require teachers to empower students to find, and express their 'voice'. Jessie (Drama Teacher, Merlion Secondary School) believed that drama draws students into 'a world where you are experimenting with your imagination' in a 'safe and secure space'. It allows students to think and say 'things that are taboo' (Appendix A: 5, lines 110 - 113). Students are therefore provided with opportunities to critically examine issues and 'participate in this world' (line 78).

The importance of allowing student voices in the classroom is emphasized in both critical and constructivist theories. Critical and constructivist educators both highlight that teachers' voices should not dominate classroom time in a uni-directional mode from teacher to student, but instead dialogues between teacher and students, and students with each other should be encouraged. Critical theorists term this, 'disappropriation' whereby teachers should 'deliberately cast off authority as speaker so that students can claim some authority of their own' (McLaren, 1989: 235). This 'primacy of voice' should form the teaching-learning model in the classroom.

Similarly, constructivists state that teacher-student, and student-to-student dialogue in the classroom contribute positively to the meaning making process, and empowers students to have ownership, and an interest in learning. Furthermore, student-to-student dialogue, or 'cooperative learning' has been found to benefit interpersonal relationships between students, which is useful especially when dealing with issues such as prejudice and discrimination (Brooks & Brooks, 1993: 108 - 110). This would be useful in Singapore classrooms where dissonances between the various races were often observed.

Therefore, all drama teachers have the responsibility of empowering students to find their 'voice'. This is achieved through providing a wide range of content and contexts for exploration in the classroom, allowing dialogues to occur, and student voices to be heard. Edmiston states that because of this responsibility, all drama teachers are simultaneously 'moral educators', as 'there are moral messages and meanings in every classroom interaction and every teacher choice' (Edmiston, 1995: 115). Through

classroom dialogues, the morality of teachers' and students' opinions and actions are discussed and evaluated, allowing 'ethical understandings' to occur (ibid). These dialogues are to be encouraged as the process enables students to develop their own morality, as opposed to being told 'what to think' or endorsing 'moral relativism' (ibid: 116).

Consequently, a 'circle of care' (ibid: 123) is developed in the classroom as teachers converse with their students, where students dialogue with each other, and ultimately with themselves; forging their identities as players within communities, society, and the global village.

To end, critical and constructivist pedagogies are key paradigms in a Socratic education. Harnessing them would enable what Giroux terms, a 'language of possibility' whereby students are actively engaged in the making of society, leading to 'social transformation' (McLaren, 1989: 189 - 190). Consequently, young Singaporeans would be committed to the growth and remaking of the country, fulfilling the aims of 'Singapore 21' (Goh, 1999, www.singapore21.org/speeches_240499.html).

Providing an Aesthetic Education

> Fundamentally, the arts matter because they are able to render visible or audible profound transpersonal meanings. .... It is these "problems of life" that scientific inquiry cannot touch that the arts have the power and the symbolic means to address. The arts offer us metaphors illuminating the human condition. They provoke and nurture an understanding of ourselves.
>
> (Abbs, 1994: 49)

The other crucial component that encompasses learning in the Socratic mode is to provide students with an aesthetic education. This ensures that students' learning experiences are holistic and utilize both the cognitive and affective. However, the literature earlier reviewed demonstrated that there was a lack of focus on aesthetic education in Singapore schools. This was due to the arts being misunderstood as 'soft, irrational, and incidental to our needs as logical, rational beings' (Wong, 2001, http://www.gov.sg/sgip/announce/070801aw.htm).

The fieldwork in both Brisbane and Singapore, and the literature reviewed have proved the above statement as a misconception. As humans, we react and respond firstly through our senses but it is together with the mind that meaning is attributed to these sensations. Abbs (1989: 210) states that, 'art has its roots in instinct (hence its power) and its blossom in consciousness (hence its educative importance)'. Therefore, aesthetic learning involves both the cognitive and affective resulting in a powerful and holistic way of meaning making absent in many other subjects in school. Teachers interviewed for this study stated that one of their aims in drama was to give students 'confidence in the feeling levels in their lives as part of their intellectual and cognitive experience' (Karen, Appendix A: 3, lines 160 - 162).

Furthermore, Best (1992: 142) states that teachers can provide students with an 'education of feeling' which arises through the learning of the art form. He states that, 'the education of feeling in the arts consists in giving reasons for, and encouraging people to recognize for themselves, different conceptions of a work of art'. Therefore, through teaching students the skills, elements and conventions of an art form(s), or 'more finely discriminating conceptions of the arts', teachers are providing 'the possibility of a progressive development of more finely discriminated feelings' in students (ibid). Consequently, students learn a range of feelings, and how to make sense of, and express them.

This contributes towards the development of an emotional intelligence; an equally important intelligence required in many situations, and in interactions with each other. Gardner terms this interpersonal, and intrapersonal intelligence (Campbell, 1999: xvi). Similarly, Robinson (2001: 154) states that the affect, or our emotional intelligence has a role to play in creativity and should not be neglected.

Therefore, schools in Singapore need to realize and acknowledge the role of an aesthetic education in their curriculum. This would result in students who are emotionally intelligent and cognitively smart. Even though some schools have awakened to this need, such as those studied during the fieldwork, there is still a resistance to whole-heartedly embrace aesthetic learning in the curriculum. Perhaps as state-run and funded schools, there needs to be a stronger commitment from policy makers in encouraging an aesthetic education through making all the arts as subjects in

the curriculum. It is only then that the balance between cognitive and affective learning in schools will be redressed, and a holistic education achieved.

The Aesthetic Curriculum

The Arts as A Generic Community of Subjects

An education system that acknowledges the importance of an aesthetic education should provide students with opportunities to learn all of the different art forms, or symbolic languages in the arts. To only teach art and music in the curriculum as is currently practiced in Singapore is to deprive young Singaporeans opportunities to learn, and make meaning in other modes offered by the other art forms. Furthermore, an ability-driven education system should allow students opportunities to discover and develop their talents in the different art disciplines; honing and harnessing their multiple intelligences. This requires the arts to be understood as a generic community of subjects that are different yet complementary.

A Strong Foundation in The Arts

Another important factor to consider in order for young Singaporeans to reap the full benefits of an arts education is the need for in-depth and prolonged aesthetic learning experiences. Aesthetic learning should begin at a young age with exposure to all art forms, followed by opportunities for specialization in the teenage years and beyond. This is the model that arts educators in Queensland have adopted and resonates with

studies from *The Champions of Change* (1999). The latter found that only 'high-arts' students, or students who experienced prolonged or intense exposure to the arts benefited from learning aesthetically. Additionally, these results only surfaced after a significant period of time, and were found to also increase with time.

As well, a strong foundation, and in-depth experiences in arts learning ensures that students master 'the knowledge contained in a domain', thereby becoming 'the source of variations in the knowledge system of a domain'; encouraging creativity to occur (Feldman, Csikszentmihalyi & Gardner, 1994: 22).

The Conservationist and Grounded Aesthetic

The 'conservationist' (Abbs, 1987: 4) and 'grounded' aesthetic (Willis, 1990: 1) were two aesthetic paradigms reviewed for this study, and were found to be crucial for aesthetic learning in the classroom.

However, the fieldwork in Singapore found that schools that offered drama programs during curriculum time had their aims rooted in students' personal and social development. There were also hidden aims to improve spoken English. Therefore, the lack of emphasis on an aesthetic education resulted in a weak acquisition of dramatic skills, a loosely structured curriculum and the absence of aesthetic learning in the classroom. The learning *through* drama model in the Singapore classrooms studied was partially compromised because students had no prior experience of learning *in* drama. Hornbrook states that:

> A dramatic curriculum which pays careful attention to theatre practice will allow drama teachers access to a subject framework within which they will be able to focus on the quality of the dramatic product as well as on the issues disclosed by it.
>
> (Hornbrook, 1991: 2)

Therefore, students' personal and social development occurs through the learning and execution of the dramatic form accompanied by the lesson content. The focus should be primarily on the art form and not the lesson content; acknowledging the unique nature of learning through the mind, body and affect. This requires the 'conservationist aesthetic' to be at the heart of the dramatic curriculum where students learn the history and techniques of the various dramatic forms (Abbs, 1987: 4). They should also study dramatic texts which are rich in content for lessons as well.

Aside from the conservationist aesthetic, the 'grounded aesthetic' is also integral in the drama classroom (Willis, 1990: 1). McLaren (1989: 227) states that 'students cannot learn "usefully" unless teachers develop an understanding of the various ways in which student perceptions and identities are constituted'. Aesthetic learning that includes the grounded aesthetic ensures that the meaning making process is relevant and engaging to students. It constitutes schools that are 'cells of creative living' and not places where students feel alienated from daily life (Abbs, 1979: 86). Incorporating students' lived experience and everyday encounters with culture prevents the dichotomy of learning in school as dull and commercial culture as 'colorful, ritualistic, releasing' (ibid: 55). Educators that harness the grounded aesthetic ensure that their lessons involve evocative, and 'aesthetically-charged material', a crucial component that contributes towards aesthetic learning (MacDonald, 1993: 86).

A Student-Centered Curriculum

Findings from the fieldwork in Brisbane revealed that drama curriculum should be student-centered if it is to be maximally beneficial. This involved building rapport, and getting to know one's students. It also meant planning that allowed curriculum to be flexible to take into account learner styles, and development. If necessary, teachers researched into particular students' backgrounds in order to gain a more holistic understanding of him/her to devise useful learning strategies and lesson plans.

Donna (HOD, Springvale State High School) often sought feedback on the curriculum from students. This took place usually after the end of every unit, where student responses determined whether lesson plans were re-worked, or replaced the following year. She termed this the 'learning-teaching partnership' where students were encouraged to have ownership over the learning process (Appendix A: 2, lines 203 - 210). She also saw 'no point in a group of adults writing these units thinking they know the students because they have no input' (lines 210 - 212). A similar practice was found at All Saints College, in addition to feedback sessions conducted with students on the drama program as a whole.

Therefore, planning curriculum that is student-centered enables the learning process to be relevant, interesting and meaningful for students. It also allows them ownership over their learning, and is in sync with an ability-driven education.

Integrating Technology into the Curriculum

The importance of technology was reflected in the ethos of schools in both Brisbane and Singapore. This was a reflection of a wider societal trend whereby a knowledge-based economy necessitated the use of technology. The yearbook of the Ministry of Education states that, 'the ability of Singaporeans to continually master new technologies will have a critical impact on our continued global competitiveness' (Ministry of Education, 2000: 19). Technology is the new language of the 21st century and has infiltrated many sectors of the economy. It is a contributing agent in the Creative Industries. However, the fieldwork conducted in both countries found that schools had not yet actively integrated technology into the drama curriculum.

In Brisbane, this was due to the unequal provision of infrastructural resources in schools, and the lack of training most drama teachers had in technology. Another factor that hindered the harnessing of technology was the uncertainty on how to integrate it into the drama curriculum without compromising aesthetic learning; involving the use of the body and the senses, or what Donna (HOD, Springvale State High School) calls, 'the human spirit' (Appendix A: 2, line 290).

Unlike Brisbane, schools in Singapore have technological resources provided in schools[54]. However, integrating technology in drama programs was not a priority in the schools studied. This was because drama teachers and artists found it challenging to

[54] The Ministry of Education's IT masterplan launched in 1997 saw the installment of computers in classrooms, and teachers and students being trained in using technology. The use of technology is also infused into subject teaching and learning.

even impart basic dramatic skills, and foster aesthetic learning within the short time periods they were given.

However, the increasing presence of technology in education is real, and it is a language of the present and future. Therefore, schools that offer drama as a subject should not ignore its presence but seek to integrate it into their curriculum. This should be in the spirit of viewing technology as a means to an end; to the learning and creating process, but not an end in itself where aesthetic learning is compromised. The integration of technology would also be acknowledging that many students' grounded aesthetic involves the use of technology, where denying its role in contemporary culture would be depriving students of relevant and meaningful learning experiences.

Working with Artists-in-Residence

Findings from the fieldwork demonstrate that artists-in-residence contribute positively to aesthetic learning in schools. However, they seem to be more effective when asked to complement existing classroom work, and when not directly responsible for pedagogical outcomes. In Singapore, many challenges arose when artists wore the hat of drama teachers that affected learning outcomes. Some of them included being responsible for discipline and fostering teamwork amongst students, and educating other teachers and administrators in the school on the merits of drama in education, amongst others.

In Brisbane, students at All Saints College benefited greatly from their interactions with artists invited to their school. These experiences served to extend the learning occurring in their drama classrooms, and provided them with opportunities to work with professional artists. Karen felt that this lent 'that lovely integrity you lose in classroom practice' (Appendix A: 3, lines 1000 - 1001). Although these artists were trained pedagogically, they were not ultimately responsible for pedagogical outcomes in the classroom and could instead concentrate on imparting their expertise to the students. The presence of the support of a drama teacher ensured that residencies were beneficial and meaningful for all parties as curriculum could be planned together, and further extended when the residency was over. Thus, artists-in-residencies provide students with a level of skills and experiences that may not be provided by a drama teacher, and complement the curriculum.

Working with artists in schools also contributes towards building, and maintaining the link between schools and the arts industry. *The Arts in Schools* (1982) was a seminal study conducted in the UK commissioned by the Gulbenkian Foundation. It recommends that contact between students and artists can affect the former's attitudes towards the arts by 'demystifying them and by emphasizing their basic seriousness' (Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, 1982: 117). Interaction with artists may provide the necessary encouragement, and relevant contacts for students looking to join the industry upon graduation. Additionally, drama teachers are able to keep in touch with developments in the industry.

Providing Co-Curricular Activities

Besides working with artists-in-residence, students' participation in co-curricular activities was also found to complement the drama curriculum. These activities took the form of watching performances staged in school by professional artists, theatre excursions, and performing for school and public audiences. They provided students with links, and experiences in the wider theatre industry, as well as opportunities to extend their classroom learning. Students were also allowed to identify themselves as artists which reinforced the seriousness of what was being learnt. All these contributed to deepening students' learning, and made learning in the aesthetic more meaningful.

Both Brisbane and Singapore have an arts education program organized by their respective Arts Councils whereby arts companies tour performances, and offer workshops to schools. These programs serve to expose students to the arts at a professional level, as well as to extend their classroom learning experiences. They also provide teachers opportunities to network with artists in the industry, whom may be invited in the future as artists-in-residence for the school. As well, teachers are allowed opportunities to view, and assess the quality of work produced by professional artists, and in turn, review their own practice and curriculum.

However, the fieldwork found that these performances staged by professional artists in schools seemed to benefit students in Brisbane more than their counterparts in Singapore. Drama students in Brisbane who were learning dramatic elements, forms and conventions in the classroom had opportunities to see these translated by

professional artists. They also had the advantage of accessing a dramatic language thereby providing them with more insights into performances. For most students in Brisbane, these invited performances served to extend their classroom learning, with opportunities to watch role models. For example, the class observed at Blessed Heart College had to do a written response to a touring performance for one of their assessments. On the other hand, the performances in Singapore were more of an introduction, or exposure to the arts for students, and were more entertaining than deeply educational since music was the only performing arts subject offered in the curriculum.

Additionally, it was found that the employment of Education Liaison Officers[55] (one each for primary and secondary) by the Queensland Arts Council (QAC), proved beneficial to both the organization as well as schools. Touring programs benefited from the artistic and educational expertise an officer trained in a particular art form(s) provided. Arts companies who were not familiar with curriculum and educational outcomes could draw on the expertise of this person. He/she was also responsible for the Quality Assurance Process whereby works were evaluated for their artistic and educational outcomes before touring schools. As well, this officer oversaw the production of Study Guides that accompanied touring performances, and ensured they encouraged aesthetic learning.

Excursions to the theatre to watch performances by professional artists afforded similar benefits to students as watching a performance in school. However, the former

[55] The creation of this role was a collaborative effort between QAC and Education Queensland whereby the Education Liaison Officer is a teacher seconded from the Education Ministry for a duration of time.

has an added benefit of providing the experience of watching a performance in a proper theatre venue. This contributes towards the quality of the performance watched because of the available facilities, and enhances the aesthetic experience. *The Drama Senior Syllabus* recommends 'one field excursion per semester per year level' so as 'to enrich students' dramatic and theatrical experience and to participate in arts industry related activities' (Queensland Board of Senior Secondary School Studies, 2000: 12).

Finally, apart from watching professional artists at work within the school and at theatre venues, students themselves need to be provided with opportunities to present their learning experiences to an audience. The fieldwork in Brisbane found that students in the schools studied performed at events within, and outside the school setting. These included lunch-time performances in schools, school-based events, state-based events, as well as productions staged by the school for public audiences. Some of the performances drew from classroom work, while others were created while being part of the school's Drama Club.

Providing students with performance opportunities apart from those with classroom audiences enables them to gather responses from a wider pool of people, contributing towards aesthetic learning. It also provides them with performing-related experiences. Additionally, performance opportunities outside the school benefits teachers as it provides them with opportunities to extend their practice, as well as network. Karen (HOD, All Saints College) stated that she would be professionally 'bored silly if all the performance work the students were involved with was institutionalized or school based' (Appendix A: 3, lines 735 - 737).

Therefore, schools in Singapore should continue to provide students with opportunities to participate in co-curricular activities. However, the learning benefits of these experiences will only be boosted when students simultaneously pursue the arts as subjects. The findings also reveal the benefits of having an Education Liaison Officer as facilitator between arts groups and schools, and could be a feasible model to adopt for Singapore.

To end, schools that implement a strong aesthetic curriculum have the potential to produce students who are creative and critical thinkers, and who have opportunities to develop their multiple intelligences. They would be familiar with using both the cognitive and affective in solving problems and creating products, as well as acquired a new set of symbolic languages to do so. Additionally, these students would have developed 'a constellation of capacities' that are a combination of 'cognitive competencies' and 'personal dispositions' (Burton, 1999: 43), and would have gained life-skills as a result of learning aesthetically. All these benefits are outcomes sought after by educators in Singapore but can only be achieved if the adoption of an aesthetic education is legislated and resources provided.

Resources Necessary for An Aesthetic Education

The fieldwork conducted in both Brisbane and Singapore demonstrated that certain resources are crucial for the success of an aesthetic education in schools.

They include: obtaining the support of the Principal, as well as administrative staff; ensuring a team of drama teachers within the school for support; suitable spaces for drama in terms of size and environment; sufficient time allocated for planning, teaching and learning drama; and enlisting the support and involvement of parents in drama programs and curriculum.

Other important resources are ensuring teachers are passionate about the arts, relevant training is being provided, and teachers are allowed opportunities to network and professionally develop.

A Passion for The Arts

One of the salient findings the fieldwork in Brisbane uncovered was the distinct passion teachers had for the arts. Karen's (HOD, All Saints College) statement, 'we all have arts-based lives, and we all want to keep making that our lives and not just a job. It's a passion' sums up the attitudes of the teachers studied (Appendix A: 3, lines 765 - 767).

Being passionate about the arts provided teachers with a deep satisfaction from their work. They viewed their work not as a job, but an extension of their interests, and lives. Consequently, this attitude provided motivation for their work which was often demanding. It also made teachers advocates for the arts where they sought to educate others within, and outside the school setting on the importance of the arts in education. They also strived to be role models, aware that the arts could easily be 'threatened by

rationalization' (Karen, Appendix A: 3, lines 278 - 281). Thus, the teachers sought to maintain the integrity of arts subjects, and galvanized support for them wherever possible.

In Singapore, a passion for the arts and for educating often came through the artists and educators interviewed. This was exemplified by statements such as this made by Jessie (Drama Teacher, Merlion Secondary School), 'to reach out to the last kid in the row who is straying the furthest away from education because he/she does not know what education means' (Appendix A: 5, lines 45 – 47), and from the artists and educators' deep commitment to empowering their students through drama. This is especially significant when considered against the huge constraints they face in school and from the system, and is probably the prime motivating factor why they are still practicing drama in schools.

Additionally, research states that it is important for arts teachers to continue developing themselves as artists, and not just educators. MacDonald (1993: 87) recommends that teachers 'should foster and maintain a body of artistic practice of their own that is separate from school arts projects'. She found that teachers who did so were more effective in providing aesthetic learning experiences for their students as they were familiar, and in touch with the aesthetic field, as well as the sensory aspects of their lives. In *Gaining the Arts Advantage*, researchers found that the best teachers stayed 'actively engaged in their art form' and recommend that teachers 'continue to learn and grow in mastery of their art form' as well as practice their art (Longley, 1999: 12 – 13). They further found in school districts with the strongest arts education

programs that hiring practices included auditions and portfolio reviews to assess if the applicant was competent in the art form.

McLean (1999: 7) describes the need for teachers to continue pursuing their artistic as well as educational practice as the development of the 'teacher-artist'. This requires acquiring new knowledge and skills in both fields, keeping pace with contemporary philosophies that inform art-making, creating works, watching performances and participating in arts activities, and maintaining links with the professional community and industry. The benefits of being a teacher-artist include becoming a highly effective teacher who is able to facilitate aesthetic learning in the classroom, and the ability to co-create relevant, meaningful, and credible works of art with young people.

Therefore, a passion for the arts is required for teachers to become a teacher-artist as it requires a commitment that involves time and effort; it is 'an ongoing life project' (ibid). On the other hand, being a teacher-artist also provides, and renews one's passion for the arts as it keeps teachers close to their artistic interests; thus forming a reciprocal relationship.

Teacher Training

A salient resource that is lacking in Singapore is the absence of sufficient teachers and artists who are trained in both drama, and drama pedagogy. This is an immediate shortcoming that needs to be addressed if schools in Singapore are to seriously consider offering drama as a subject in the curriculum.

Findings from the fieldwork demonstrate that drama should preferably be taught by full-time teachers as opposed to artists-in-residence if it is a subject in the curriculum. Artists are more unfamiliar with students since they are not based in the school setting. They are also less aware of the nuances of the school. Garnering teacher support and fostering a partnership also proved difficult. Furthermore, as freelancers, it is difficult for them to commit to long-term programs, and continuity with a cohort of students, and drama program becomes an issue. Finally, there are insufficient artists interested, and committed to education to meet the demand of schools in Singapore.

Training to impart an aesthetic education should ensure that all teachers have 'a philosophical underpinning based on artistic, educational, cultural and critical theory epistemologies' (McLean, 1996: 41). This ensures that they are familiar, and skilled in not only dramatic theory, but also other relevant areas of study to do with the arts, education, aesthetic and contemporary philosophies. Training should also include learning dramatic skills, as well as studies in pedagogy.

Opportunities to Network and Professionally Develop

Besides obtaining training, teachers also need to professionally develop, and network in order for their pedagogy to be relevant and effective, as well as to remain passionate in their work. The findings from the fieldwork in Brisbane reveal that having an association of drama educators contributes positively to achieving the above. Having

such as association also allows teachers, artists and academics to network with each other, thereby broadening learning experiences.

Teachers interviewed in Brisbane mentioned that they found good role models from being involved in the wider professional community. These role models provided support and encouragement for them in their journey as drama educators. In turn, they were inspired to develop significant practice, and be role models for others. Networking also provided 'positive ways of keeping the enthusiasm and passion going' (Donna, Appendix A: 2, lines 641 - 643). Additionally, it allowed drama educators to share resources and significant practice with each other, thereby providing professional development opportunities.

It is therefore recommended that drama educators in Singapore start an association where networking and professional development can occur. It would provide a place where they find support for each other, and their subject especially when drama in the curriculum is a new area in Singapore. Having a stronger voice would also contribute towards advocating for drama in education initiatives more successfully. Finally, having a national association of drama educators in Singapore would be a first step towards country representation at the international level, where educators in Singapore have unique experiences and practices to contribute to furthering drama in education.

Assessment in An Aesthetic Education

The fieldwork conducted in Brisbane and Singapore found student assessment to be an integral component of the drama curriculum.

The Arts Years 1 – 10 Syllabus defines assessment as 'the purposeful, systematic and ongoing collection of information about students' demonstrations of learning outcomes' (Queensland School Curriculum Council, 2001: 58). There are three main purposes to assessment - diagnostic, formative and summative purposes. This ensures that student assessment is a thorough process, and provides useful and meaningful information about student learning. Through these aims of assessment, teachers, students, and their care-givers are able to discern a student's learning difficulties and strengths, monitor his/her learning, and determine whether he/she has successfully learnt the subject sufficiently to graduate.

Other significant findings related to assessing outcomes in aesthetic learning include using the aesthetic field, an outcomes-based approach and fair practices.

Using the Aesthetic Field

Drama students in Brisbane are assessed using the aesthetic fields of *forming*, *presenting*, and *responding* as organizational factors[56]. These three fields as postulated

[56] *The Drama Senior Syllabus* states that forming tasks in assessment 'are used to assess achievement in the creative process of drama artmaking'. These could be practical or written (Queensland Board of Senior Secondary School Studies, 2000: 26). Presenting tasks 'are used to assess achievement in the

by Abbs (1987: 55) contribute to learning aesthetically and also influence the organization of drama curriculum.

Students who are assessed using the aesthetic field experience a well-rounded drama education as they are required to learn, and understand a variety of dramatic forms and skills. Additionally, knowledge and skills learnt need to be applied, and demonstrated in performances or written work. Students also need to be able to think critically and defend their ideas and work. The fieldwork found that using the aesthetic field and its expected outcomes for student assessment was more effective and meaningful than the assessment criteria used in the *Development Through Drama* program in Singapore[57]. The latter's criteria was too broad, vague and unrelated to each other making assessment less reliable. They were also partially focused on personal development outcomes, to match the objectives of the program. However, as discussed earlier in this chapter, such outcomes arise from learning aesthetically, *in* drama, and should not form the focus of learning.

Therefore, with drama implemented as a subject within the curriculum, schools in Singapore should assess student learning using the aesthetic field in order to evaluate their development and potential as artists effectively.

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presentation and communication of dramatic action to others' (ibid: 27), and finally, responding tasks 'are used to assess achievement in the response to the context, content and meaning of drama' (ibid). These could be either oral or written.

[57] The assessment criteria of the *Development Through Drama* program can be found at Appendix B: 11.

Using an Outcomes-Based Approach

Other findings from Brisbane revealed that *The Arts Years 1 – 10 Syllabus* assessed students not only through using the aesthetic field, but also an outcomes-based approach. The syllabus states that outcomes 'describe what students know and can do with what they know as a result of planned learning activities' (Queensland School Curriculum Council, 2001: 21). This approach towards assessment ensures that students are equipped with concrete learning experiences in drama, and are able to apply what they have learnt into tangible outcomes. Additionally, outcomes are scoped and sequenced, and clearly laid out for the ten years of study, resulting in learning that is broad-based yet sufficiently in-depth.

In response to an outcomes-based approach to planning and assessment in drama, Jenny (Specialist Drama Teacher, Blessed Heart College) stated that:

> So suddenly there were benchmarks, and I hate to call them that, but that's what they are. It gives teachers an understanding of what sorts of skills, processes, attitudes, and knowledge to provide opportunities to students that they can count on. So that is its great strength; that it very clearly lays out what students need to demonstrate that they know and can do.
>
> (Appendix A: 1, lines 222- 227)

An outcomes-based approach therefore has the potential to clarify and focus the planning, and teaching process. It also assists teachers in charting student's progress and levels of achievement, allowing them to adopt suitable strategies to boost student learning.

Fair Assessment Practices

Students need to be fairly assessed for judgments made on student learning to be meaningful. This includes ensuring students are aware of when, and how they are being assessed, as well as the assessment criteria. This process would be facilitated by an outcomes-based method to assessment, as well as distributing assessment task and criteria sheets to students before the exercise.

As well, assessment criteria should be based solely on skills and knowledge taught in the classroom. Consideration also needs to be given to different learner styles. *The Arts Years 1 – 10 Syllabus* states that 'a comprehensive range of assessment techniques and related sources of evidence allows students multiple opportunities and contexts in which to demonstrate learning outcomes' (Queensland School Curriculum Council, 2001: 58). Therefore, students need to be given more than one opportunity to demonstrate learning experiences, and in more than one context using different assessment techniques. Additionally, other forms of difference such as gender, disability, etc. have to be considered during student assessment.

To end, besides assessing student outcomes in aesthetic learning, teachers need to also be reflective of their own practice, and assess the effectiveness of their drama programs. This could result from observing each other's classroom practice, and providing feedback, as well as garnering student responses. Being part of the wider education and theatre industry also allows teachers to benchmark their practice, and programs against other educators and artists.

Conclusion

To conclude, schools in Singapore can no longer afford to ignore the role an aesthetic education plays in schools. Although critical thinking skills, creativity, an ability-driven, and holistic education are phrases often heard from education officials, more needs to be done to make them a reality. These goals and outcomes in education can be catalyzed by making an aesthetic education an integral part of the schooling experience for students in Singapore. This is through recognizing all the arts as valid subjects to be taught in the curriculum. Together, they reiterate the need for a Socratic education to be provided.

Furthermore, this need is increasingly being recognized by educators, parents and students in Singapore, exemplified in a recent newspaper article published in *The Straits Times* ('Next change: more choice in the classroom, please', 2002: H10). Those interviewed were asked what they would change about education in Singapore if they were the Minister for Education. Most replied less emphasis on exams, and the need for learning to be fun and engaging. This required more emphasis on an ability-driven, and student-centered curriculum and pedagogy, and 'more creative ways of teaching children who may not do well in their studies but have other strengths, such as being good in dance or sports' (ibid). The need to inculcate non-academic skills such as emotional well-being and life-skills was also raised.

Therefore, education in Singapore needs to be empowered to provide holistic learning experiences for students, and learning liberated to instill a love for learning in students; leading to a transformative education. This necessitates more changes and support in favor of a Socratic education in Singapore schools. It is only then that young Singaporeans can rise successfully to the call for Singapore to be a 'renaissance city for the arts' and a 'globapolis' – rooted to Singapore yet connected to the world – in a knowledge-based economy that prizes creativity and human capital (Goh, 2001, http://sg.cna. mediacorpnews.com/ndp2001/rally_en5.htm). Future research should focus on the success of the Socratic curriculum in Singapore if implemented, in fulfilling its aims in education, as well as the larger society.

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LIBERATING LEARNING AND EMPOWERING EDUCATION: INCORPORATING DRAMA AS A SUBJECT IN SINGAPORE SCHOOLS

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Volume 2

Appendixes

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Appendix A

Appendix A: 1

Interview with Jenny
Blessed Heart College
10 May 2001

Su-Lin: Why did you decide to become a teacher, and how did drama feature in all of that?

Jenny: I didn't come straight into teaching. I had a background in performing arts. I didn't know whether I wanted to go into acting, or into teaching. So when I finished my degree, I took a year off and I pursued acting full-time. And it was quite successful; which was good. And while I was acting, I was also doing a lot of work with Brisbane Youth Theatre and decided that I really enjoyed the teaching side of it, so I went into Primary School teaching and taught at a school just 40 min. outside of Brisbane; I taught Year 5 and 6, and then I came back to a school near Brisbane and taught lower primary, so Year level 1, 2 and 3. So I taught in Primary Schools 6 years as a full-time teacher. But while I was teaching I was using drama methodology. And that was because of my performing arts background. At this stage there was no drama syllabus or guidelines, it was just if you had an interest whereas in secondary, the syllabus was already in existence and was already being taught. This was about 1988.

Then I came into contact with a lady called Debbie Wall who was then the President of the Queensland Drama Association and had dinner with her. And by the end of the dinner, I was on the committee of the Association. So what happened then was that my whole world opened up in terms of knowing there was an association about the promotion of drama in education. At that stage it was very secondary focused; they didn't look at primary. But I ended up doing a whole lot of workshops about that and at the end of that year, I was asked by the Department of Education to come out of my classroom and go and work with teachers in schools to help them understand how to use drama in education. That was the same year that the curriculum guide came out for *Drama Makes Meaning* which was the guide for teachers who wanted to use drama, that wasn't in the syllabus. It just gave you some ideas. So that happened for 3 years, and I traveled all over the state to help teachers who wanted to use drama. But I got really tired and burnt-out by the end of that.

After that I worked as an artist-in-residence in schools and there was no one like me at that stage doing the work. I was working in state schools, catholic schools and independent schools. I did that for 2 years, and after that my creative energy just went because

just about every single week I had to plan a new unit of drama. And then a position came up where the government was implementing the 8 key learning areas and the arts was one; and 12 positions became available in the key learning area - Key Learning Area Regional Coordinator (the Arts). So I applied for 4 of the positions around the state and got all of them. So I chose to work in Metropolitan West, which is the largest schooling region in Queensland. It has the largest non-English speaking population, it has the lowest income per capita around the state, so it was a fairly interesting region to work in.

So I was responsible for about 3 and a half thousand teachers across all art forms – drama, dance, art, music and media education; looking at providing in-service opportunities, going in and setting up support networks, running things like the Minister's Arts Awards, and all those sorts of things. And I only did that for 14 months because what happened was the Queensland Arts Council, who is the provider of arts performance programs for schools, headhunted me as an Education Officer, and I had for position for 4 years.

Then I finished off my Masters full-time, then worked part-time in places like this school where I teach 11 hours a week and working on various other projects. So I guess I'm a freelancer now. I set up my own company last year; all those sorts of things. This year I'm doing my PhD full-time, I'm working here, I'm working at the Queensland School Curriculum Council; writing the primary syllabus, and just doing bits and pieces, like I'm the Education Advisor at the Brisbane Powerhouse; so I write all the curriculum materials to help teachers with the programs .... I do the Teacher's Notes at La Boite, I do various things. It's nice. I have a little bit of flexibility but still very heavily involved in the art form of drama.

Su-Lin: Is the company you set up a theatre company?

Jenny: No. It's an arts curriculum advisory company. So basically I help schools plan their drama curriculum, I can provide workshops for them, stuff like that. What has been interesting is that a lot of professional associations, like the Early Childhood or the English Teacher's Association are now realizing how important, and how useful drama is, so I go and do workshops for their conferences and stuff like that.

Su-Lin: You mentioned an artist-in-residence scheme that you were a part of for 2 years. Could you elaborate a bit more on that?

Jenny: About 1993 – 1995 I did that and 5 years prior to that, there was a

government scheme where schools through education, could apply for up to $5,000 to bring an artist into a school to work on a project, like a weaver, or a mural artist, or something like that and predominantly, they brought in visual artists. They wouldn't think of bringing musicians in, or dramatists in, or people like that. And that all collapsed because the scheme simply ran out of money but schools were still very interested in bringing artists in to provide a very focused arts experience for the students, and to provide an avenue of professional development for their teachers because what I demanded was that for the teachers I was working with, came with their kids to the sessions. What happened in a lot of cases was that the teachers thought they had a free hour, and they sent their kids to have an experience, they came back and there would be no follow-up in the classroom. So that's one of the problems with the scheme.

But basically the way I worked was that I had a number of consultative meetings with the teachers or the teacher I was working with; I worked in a lot of small schools where there were only 3 or 4 teachers and we co-devised what they wanted. So I never came in and said, "I've got this fantastic drama program and this is what we're going to do." There was an element of negotiation and that was important because they felt that they had an ownership of the program. So we did that and that sometimes took 4 or 5 weeks, and depending on how long they wanted the series of workshops to be planned, which I always tried to tie back to their school or classroom curriculum. That wasn't necessarily the case with a lot of arts. The stuff that I did never had a performance outcome. A lot of artists-in-residence had you know: "we've had a visual artist so we have to have an exhibition" or "we've had an actor here so we have to have a performance". Mine was simply about exposure to process. It wasn't about creating an extravaganza.

Su-Lin: You mentioned you teach 11 hours a week. How is that broken down?

Jenny: That's interesting. Up until the end of Term 1 which was the Easter holidays, I taught all the classes; Years 5 through to Year 7. There are 11 classes here. The time-table allows 45 minute lessons. What happened at the end of Term 1 is that the Year 5s might not do drama till the end of the year because music sucks up an additional period. This school has a very strong music focus. So what happens is that now some of the Year 7s have 2 periods a week. Which is fantastic because they are the kids which have a lot of skills under their belt. So it works out roughly that the Year 5s and 6s have a 45 min. lesson a week, Year 7s have 2 45 min. lessons a week.

Su-Lin: How would you describe the students here generally?

Jenny: Well, it's a school that caters for boys from Years 5 – 12. I don't have a lot to do with the secondary. Generally, because it's a Catholic Independent School, you have a variety of different backgrounds here; both culturally and socio-economic. The fees in this school are not as high as in other Catholic Independent schools so a lot of parents find it an attractive option. And that's part of the Augustine educational philosophy. So you have a mixture of socio-economic and cultural groups although predominantly I would say the majority of boys come from Italian backgrounds; being a Catholic school, and predominantly Anglo-Saxon. There are a few from Asian backgrounds. You have good years and bad years, and like every other school, there are problems here and there but overall, it's an average school.

Su-Lin: Let's talk about the drama syllabus. It started off as a guide, *Drama Makes Meaning?*

Jenny: What happened was prior to 1990 in primary schools, drama was under the umbrella of the English curriculum. And it was under the umbrella in terms of oracy and speech. So we learnt to speak very well and say poetry very well. And that was basically drama, and it was about performance, reading plays about the class. And then in 1990, Debbie Wall was called into the Dept. of Education to write the drama curriculum guide. This came under the new framework in the Dept. of Education which was called the P-10 curriculum where they were looking at developing a sequentially developed syllabus spanning Years 1 – 10 but didn't quite eventuate at that time. So that was launched in 1992 and that was the first time that primary teachers had in a book some kind of sequential development about how drama should be taught.

Su-Lin: Was this to be done in a period of its own, or ....

Jenny: It's hard to say. I can only speak from my own experience. I taught it in an integral way so my drama work was used in social studies, in teaching science, so the kids were marking meta-cognitive links across the curriculum. In some schools, they were fortunate in that they still had the speech and drama specialists who came in and did Trinity College stuff so they had their own period. It was taught in a variety of different ways with no one model. It was never mandated. So after that, came along the Dance Guide and the Media Guide and the revising of the arts syllabus because in Queensland at this time, the only mandated syllabus were Music and Visual Art. So yes, there was a guide, and that guide has been around and teachers have used it, serviced it, made videos about it, we did all sorts of stuff. And then 3 years ago,

there was the creation of the Queensland School Curriculum Council which was to build on the 8 Key Learning Areas. And that was when the syllabus, the Years 1 – 10 in drama and the arts was starting to be developed.

Su-Lin: So with the *Drama Makes Meaning* Guide, it would be the English teacher using it?

Jenny: Well, in primary school you don't have an English teacher. You have a teacher that teaches all subjects so they have the class for 6 hours a day and they teach everything. That's in general primary schools. In this school, they have teachers that rotate around because we work on building boys up to be ready for the secondary model where they move around to different teachers.

Su-Lin: So with the new drama syllabus which you are also involved in, why was it written, and what do you think are the differences, and the benefits or shortcomings?

Jenny: It was written because the government had mandated that schools had to teach the 8 Key Learning Areas and they suddenly realized that there was no syllabus particularly in the areas of the Arts, Science and the Study of Society and the Environment. So they then had to create the syllabus to support the teachers. The thing about the drama strand in the syllabus, it builds directly upon what *Drama Makes Meaning* was doing; not the content but the processes. What has been good about the re-writing of the drama strand was that it was done collaboratively with teachers across the state; so it's not our vision but the drama teachers in Queensland's vision which is why it is being embraced so whole-heartedly.

The thing that was layered on top of that was that for the first time, on a piece of paper, it said, by the end of Year 1, or the end of Year 3, or the end of Year 7, these students should be able to do this, this, this, this. So suddenly there were benchmarks, and I hate to call them that, but that's what they are. It gives teachers an understanding of what sorts of skills, processes, attitudes, and knowledge to provide opportunities to students that they can count on. So that's its great strength; that it very clearly lays out what students need to demonstrate that they know and can do. The old syllabus didn't; it wasn't clear. It didn't say in Year 5, you need to teach these elements of drama. It just said we teach the elements of drama whereas what we've done is that we've pulled all the conventions, all the elements, ... drama doesn't really have content, we draw on other curriculum areas for content but it has content in that you need to know certain terminology. So we pulled all that apart and said what can kids do at each level? So

it's the first time that that has ever happened.

And for me personally, someone who has been teaching in primary schools for 15 years, it has completely changed my teaching. Even as a writer of the syllabus, and even now, implementing it, it has made the clarity of my lessons much stronger. It has made me sit down and clearly plan what the students are going to do whereas before it was: "oh, well, I might do this story drama or I might do a mask unit" but now I have to go further and say, I have to teach these skills so that when the boys get to Year 8, they are at this level. And that's fantastic. That might not be the same for all teachers in the state and from a personal point of view, I think that a lot of primary teachers are going to have a lot of difficulty with the arts syllabus in general, because they might never have been taught it themselves, or the resources are not clear, or they don't have the confidence. You've got to be pretty brave to do drama because most of the time you have to step down from that authorial position and give the authority to the kids.

Su-Lin: How does the QSCC deal with that?

Jenny: The QSCC is in a very funny position. It's position is that it is the writer and creator of the syllabus but it's not responsible for implementation. Once the syllabus is endorsed by the government, then it is up to the educational authorities. So the Independent schools association, Catholic education, and Education Queensland decide on whether they want to implement it or not. At the moment it's all very glowing; we've got a new syllabus, and it's all happening, and it's going to be released in September, and we're going to be able to use it. But the government might decide that because of their monetary position, that they're not going to mandate that all 5 artforms of the syllabus need to be taught. We might go back to the status quo where it's music and visual art because all the resources are already in place.

So we all sound really hopeful but at the back of my mind, we might only go back to the model that we've got at the moment which is, if you want to teach drama, teach it but you don't have to. So we don't know what's going to happen until the syllabus is endorsed by the government in September, and until they decide to mandate it. But regardless of what happens, I think a lot of primary teachers will still use that syllabus in terms of informing their teaching methodology and planning, which can only be good for drama.

Su-Lin: When you mention that you, Debbie Wall, Sue Davis and yourself consulted the various schools, was it to share the syllabus?

Jenny: Yes. It was an interesting process. QADIE won the tender. What we had to do was various groups of people had to tender to see who would be the writers of the syllabus. And it just so happened that all the professional associations that supported the different art forms won the tender in each of their area. So QADIE won the tender to write the syllabus. It was Sue, Debbie and myself who put in that tender on behalf of QADIE but QADIE endorsed us. Part of our philosophy in writing what we wrote was that there were a hell of a lot more teachers in Queensland with as much experience as the 3 of us have and we really felt that we had to include them in some way.

So what we did was the 3 of us sat down for a couple of weeks and went through *Drama Makes Meaning*, the other syllabuses from other countries, and we created what we thought was the starting point. After that we had a reference group that was predominantly Brisbane based and people who could travel, so from the Sunshine Coast, Gold Coast and we came together over the September holidays. We worked together for a week, and we broke people up into their specialist areas. So all the primary people worked together, all the secondary, all the tertiary, whatever, and they then looked at what we had done and then gave us more ideas and started re-working, and started re-wording.

Once we had that, we put in an expression of interest on the QADIE egroup and on the website for interested people who wanted to be involved in the process but couldn't because of the distance. So we had what we called the corresponding reference group. So whenever we finished some work, we photocopied it and sent it out to all the stakeholders. It was huge, and it cost so much money for QADIE to do it. Other art forms didn't do it. They just had their 3 people and they wrote it. And it was interesting to see the response to what we had created and what the other art forms had done and the teachers in Queensland really feel like they have a stake in this syllabus. We kept putting it up online so people could get in and modify, and talk about it. It took hours and hours of concentration but in the end, that whole process has been really productive in that teachers now want to use it because they can see that what they have said has now been taken on board.

Su-Lin: So these teachers were primary teachers …

Jenny: Yes, and secondary teachers because the syllabus spans Years 1 – 10. So Years 1 – 7 primary, and years 8 – 10 secondary. But we also pulled in people who worked in specialist schools, people who worked with children who were intellectually handicapped, people who worked in gender equity, people who worked

specifically in Aboriginal and Torres Straits education, so we tried to be inclusive of as many groups as we possibly could. We handpicked teachers that we knew who were working in the art form that had possibly presented at a QADIE conference, had written stuff in journals. So they were confident enough in their practice to look at ours to go: "oh that's rubbish".

Su-Lin: Could you venture a figure on how many teachers in primary school who actually use drama?

Jenny: That is such an unknown. It's the degree of drama too. Whether they are preparing an assembly item, and that might be their students' one off experience with drama. Does that count as being a teacher of drama in primary school? I think not. Or you go to the other extreme where you've got a teacher like myself, that teaches all their curriculum through drama, both as a teaching methodology and as an art form. It's really hard to say. I would figure that you're probably looking at a tenth, two-tenths of the population teaching drama in primary schools. None of the teachers here use drama although this year has been interesting as some of the teachers have been approaching me for drama activities they can use in their classrooms. So that's beginning to come in although it's at a fairly low-level. But the numbers are hard to tell. I mean at the Association, we have about 400 members, probably about 56 of those members are primary.

Su-Lin: You teach part-time at this school. Do you think that has any benefits? Do you face any challenges teaching at this school?

Jenny: One of the models that I think might be used is someone like me because if schools can afford to bring in someone in a specialist area to teach drama as part of the curriculum, they'll do it. And maybe because it'll save teachers a lot of heartache. I think another model they might use is to look at their staff and say, well, there are 3 people on our staff who are interested in drama, or who have taught drama; maybe they can rotate around the classrooms while their classes are at PE or music or whatever. So I think that might happen, as well as ordinary classroom teachers doing it.

So ... yes, the unique position of this school is that it is lucky enough and has the extended history of someone teaching it. It used to be speech and then it became speech and drama, and now I've had to re-educate my students to just call it drama. But everybody knows about drama now. The challenges I have here is two-fold: there is a space issue. There is no one dedicated space for drama in this school. So I rotate from an art room, a music room and a general purpose space. The other issue is the re-education of the staff and particularly, the admin. about what

drama is. Their previous experience with drama is doing an annual concert with 324 boys on stage which is almost a physical impossibility. These boys had no knowledge of process and were being yelled at to do their thing and then get off. What I did was to use their classroom work and we re-worked it. And I tried to re-educate them to not do a concert but that we were actually doing classroom presentations.

We're going to have that in a couple of weeks and I am hoping the teachers will see how easy it is to do that; do a presentation of 20 minutes each and then go home rather than ... it took us 13 weeks of rehearsals of out of class time, out of school time, rehearsing in the evening, hours and hours to do a concert. So there's a whole re-education process still going on. The other thing that is very important to this school is assessment and evaluation. And the parents want to see something or outcomes and rightly so but it's difficult when you are doing something that is process-based and not product-oriented.

Su-Lin: Do you think the new syllabus will ease that?

Jenny: Yes, we're reporting on what the kids can do, not what they can't do which is what a report card is about. Usually, traditionally a report card tells you what the kids didn't achieve, not what they did. The outcomes approach with the syllabus encourages teachers to report not only to parents but also to the kids themselves for the first time about what they can do, not what they can't do. So it's couched in very positivist language. I think the problem in primary schools is how do you report on 5 outcomes that have possibly 15 outcomes over a 2 year period. I think that's going to be one of the biggest hurdles we will have to overcome. At this school, the administration has said that they are not going to use an outcomes approach to education. We can use the new syllabus but I still have to give the boys marks out of 1 – 5 and use a rating system on their report card. So that's going to be a huge re-education for parents. Because they understand an A or B but not an outcome like: "this student has managed the elements of drama really well." What does that mean in the real world?

Su-Lin: You're a specialist teacher. Do you know if schools still bring in artists from the community to do a project or program?

Jenny: Yes. I've just done one here. The piece that we did for the state conference was done outside of school hours and I brought an artist in and we co-devised a piece. So that is still used ... well, I still use it. But a lot of schools find it easy to bring in a dance, or drama or visual arts and say we've done drama, we've done dance, etc. and it's outside of school hours. That's the usual, and I think

that will continue.

Su-Lin: Do you know whether any co-planning or co-teaching takes place or does the artist very much take over?

Jenny: I think it works on the model where teachers think, "I've got a free period" and from my experience, I think there's not a lot of interaction between the artist and the teacher.

Su-Lin: When you plan the syllabus here, do you work with other teachers in terms of the content?

Jenny: No. When I first came here I tried to go round and see what the teachers were doing, particularly in English, Social Studies, and Science because that's where you can draw good stuff from for drama and it just didn't work because I had to plan 11 different units; and I just .. my head got muddled and so I had to make a decision in term 2 which goes against what I believe about drama being integrated in the curriculum. I just had to set up a Year 5, Year 6 and Year 7 program and work outside of what they were doing in the classroom. Nothing I could do about it.

Jenny: When I got to this school, I felt it was rather unusual that you didn't see parents in classrooms here. In most primary schools in Queensland, they encourage parents to be part of their children's education where they come in and do reading groups or to come in and help with art. And when I worked in a Primary school, the parents were in my room all the time. Here, it's pretty much a closed door unless they are invited. But when you do request for help, they come forward like when I did the presentation at the Brisbane Powerhouse. They like to be involved that way but not directly in the classroom. But they are all very supportive of drama.

Su-Lin: So you didn't have to do any re-education in terms of the parents?

Jenny: No. I think that's done by the boys. Well, I know because parents come talk to me in the car park or at the shopping center or something. They go home and talk about what they've done in drama and from what I can tell, it's very different from what they've done before. So I think the re-education in drama has happened in terms of the boys' conversations with their parents at home. Sometimes I do send notes home and the tone I adopt is very friendly and open so I think they've got a warm, fuzzy feeling about drama from both my communication and the boys' communication.

Su-Lin: So parents actually get an opportunity to get in touch with you?

Jenny: Yes. They either ring me or turn up at the end of the day. I've never been asked to attend a Parent-Teacher meeting at the beginning of the year. I'd be quite happy to do but I've never been asked.

Su-Lin: Are all the various productions like the Passion Play, and the Presentation at the QADIE Conference done outside of curriculum time?

Jenny: They used to be. They used to require the boys to come for Sunday rehearsals, after-school rehearsals, and my philosophy is that if you are going to value a subject area, then it's got to be done during school time. So I changed the whole structure about how that was going to happen. It was all done during school hours, there were only 2 days for the concert where there was a complete disruption to the school time-table, everything else was done in their drama class. So whether it's a production or class work that's going to become a production, it's in class time so that it is seen as a valuable part of the curriculum. Because I see no point in creating things that doesn't come out of the kids' class work.

Su-Lin: Does this school have a counselor or educational psychologist?

Jenny: When I got here, behavior in drama classes was appalling. Absolutely appalling. And I think it was because of the model the boys were used to working. And also because drama is the only subject they do that doesn't require them to sit behind a desk. So suddenly they have all this freedom and they don't know what to do with it. So it's taken me 18 months to get some boys to realize that drama is like any other subject that you listen, and all that. As for significant behavioral problems, there were a couple of boys, well, not a couple, quite a few boys who are ADD, ADA and are on medication, and some are off medication. And in drama, in a non-structured environment in terms of the physical environment but where the lessons are structured; when they get into a non-structured environment, they just go haywire. So we do have both, a school counselor and an educational psychologist on staff that we can refer the boys to.

Appendix A: 2

Interview with Donna
HOD, Performing Arts, Springvale State High School
27 April 2001 & 16 May 2001

Su-Lin: Why did you decide to become a drama teacher?

Donna: I decided to become a teacher in about Grade 6, and it's because I really respected my teachers, and I thought it would be a really inspiring job to work with students. At the end of Grade 10, I decided to further that decision and I decided I wanted to be a High School teacher as I found a High School teacher to be more challenging, and more varied. And at one stage I was going to become an accounting teacher because I did like the business side of things as well but I chose to become an art and drama teacher. So art's my major area and drama is my second teaching area but I became the drama and dance coordinator at my previous school, and I've held this current position as Head of the Performing Arts for the last couple of years.

Su-Lin: And you've been teaching for ....

Donna: 18 years.

Su-Lin: It hasn't always been in drama?

Donna: Yes. I've always taught some drama but up untill about 3 years ago, it was always a balance of art and drama; so I might have 3 art classes and 3 drama classes. I used to teach theatre as well because that was originally a syllabus for Year 11 and 12. So we used to teach Theatre and Speech and Drama, and then the Board of Senior Secondary School Studies decided there was a lot of overlap so they produced what we now know as Senior Drama.

Su-Lin: So would any of these students have done Speech and Drama?

Donna: No. Some of the students that you saw today would have studied drama from Grade 8 up to 12. Others would have

taken it in Year 8, probably decided it was not their choice for Junior and then they've re-chosen the subject for Senior. Those students though, I personally feel find it more difficult to get through to the Grade 11 standard because they have missed 2 years of fairly intense process work. It's not to say that they can't get to a certain standard, but I think some of them find it more difficult and they need more teacher direction more rehearsal time, perhaps extra tuition. So I think you can tell the difference between those students who have had a continual learning of the subject as opposed to those who haven't had a continual learning and it's been stop start stop start. Drama is a developmental subject and students build on their skills.

Su-Lin: Why did you decide to go into the arts?

Donna: I've always loved performing, so my passions in life are live theatre, music and drawing and I guess .. I received the academic award for art in school ...I didn't study drama at school; it wasn't a subject offered in my school but I did drama privately outside of school and I was in the vocal choir and things like that. So I guess you could say I was into performing and when I chose secondary teaching, art and we had to choose a second teaching area, I just thought I didn't want to teach English, or Math or PE and drama was so energised and seemed to be fun as well as academic, and it seemed to offer everything. So when I went for the induction day and we had to choose our second teaching area, what I saw in the offer and what was being offered in the units seemed to be what I wanted to do, which I didn't get to do previously.

Su-Lin: Did you actually do your teacher training at QUT?

Donna: Yes, I did my diploma in teaching and graduated in 1984 with a diploma in art and drama teaching, and then 18 eighteen later I started my Bachelor of Education at QUT as well; part-time. I graduated in 1997, and then I did my Masters in Education at the University of Queensland in Curriculum in the Arts or the Arts in the Curriculum.

Su-Lin: You mentioned just now that drama had everything. Could you please explain that?

Donna: Ok. I'm a bit biased now because I teach it, but to me, drama is a very complete subject and to me, it not only offers students the opportunity to form, it also gives them a certain amount of skills for the outside world. To me it's a very energised subject. The students are in a practical-based subject but they also do theory but they come in energised, ready to 'rock-and-roll'. They don't sit at desks, they don't necessarily use textbooks in class-time. So it's .. that's why I call it a very complete subject. It offers so many dimensions - from writing, to forming, analysing characters, analysing people in the streets ... you've got the backstage side of it, the lighting and sound effects, we look at the role of the director, we write scripts, watch screen adaptations of live theatre, we go to the live theatre, and it just offers SO much and I don't think there are many other subjects that come into line with what drama offers

Su-Lin: You mentioned earlier about drama contributing to skills that would help them in the workplace. Could you just elaborate on that.

Donna: Definitely. We've had a lot of students wanting to do drama in Year 9 because they think it's going to help their self-esteem, confidence, thinking skills, deportment and posture, and we take a lot of our skills to the Junior and Primary but basically I think because we deal with a lot of real world issues, in terms of content, especially when we do political theatre and when they write scripts they look at issues. So even though it's drama, we're always analysing, or criticising or looking at a world issue, or something that is happening in the world - pollution, or the environment, or the GST, peer pressure, bullying; whatever's happening in the school itself or schools in Queensland.

So I think because they have so many opportunities to examine so many issues and people, and they play so many characters themselves; they get to look at a lot of different careers within drama as well, I just think it pays off when they reach Year 12. Even if they are not going to pursue drama, whether it be directing or backstage or whatever, I think you'll find that they're the ones who are more confident, they'll stick up for themselves more, they'll dress better, they'll have better posture, they'll be do-ers, not sit-ters, active people of the community willing

to do a lot for little because it's the scenario of having to do fund-raising, you've got to find your people, and there are the shows and you've got to make your props and costumes - you need a lot of energy to survive theatre; so I think they're used to doing that and generally a good community member.

Su-Lin: What are some of the outcomes you would like to see in a drama programme? What are your expectations of the students when they graduate?

Donna: At the end of Year 12, I would hope that they are extremely confident people, that they have high self-esteem, that they respect others, that they have the ability to work well in a team as well as individually, that they have a passion to want to do better and strive for success in whatever they want to do, that they have brilliant communication skills, that they will also continue to promote the arts within the family, workplace, community. We have a lot of ex students come back. They give us feedback on the courses they're studying, or if they've gone into the workforce, they come and often share with us what they're doing. We get students who come back and thank us for what we did for them. They will keep in touch with their progress I suppose. The students who aspire to succeed in drama or one of the performing or visual arts tend to go onto University, or a course, as opposed to ones who are doing a subject like drama purely for their confidence-building and self-esteem building or just because they enjoy making drama.

Su-Lin: What is your understanding of the term aesthetic education because I know that's a term that's used here.

Donna: I think aesthetic education is, one: appealing to students; not purely content based and assessment-driven, there are other parameters circling the subject itself that attract students to want to do that topic of study.

Su-Lin: Do you use that term with the students here?

Donna: Not so much. Like I wouldn't use it daily or weekly but I try to ... I do encourage them to broaden their language skills. Because unless they do a lot of reading which they don't because they do a lot of watching these days, they're not getting

that rich language so that's a term we use a lot when we teach Shakespeare; the difference between rich and strong language, so that might be when we look at terms like the aesthetics of education or the aesthetics of the room, like lighting, sets, has it got value? And that is another term I would line with aesthetics; and that it's not only valued by them but the society that we're living in … so rather than use such terminology or jargon sometimes; it tends to be heavy for 16 and 17 year olds, … I get students to reflect on a unit after their completed study and what were their strengths and weaknesses, did you enjoy the task work, did you find them challenging enough, so they give me feed-back as well and that's when I will talk to them about the value of the unit, if it's worthy of them staying in the programme or should I replace it with something else.

So I ensure that they are aware of what it is because I ask them whether what they did was of value to them, was it meaningful and was it eclectic. And if it wasn't, then I'd take it out basically or re-structure the task. I don't keep using the same tasks every year. We'd sort of re-word them, pull them apart and put it back together. It ends up being a similar task but with richer language or we make it more challenging or if it's too challenging, then bringing it back a bit.

Su-Lin: So when you're planning the work programme, do you plan it with the other teachers as well?

Donna: Yes, it's a collaborative process.

Su-Lin: Do you draw on themes that the students might throw up ….

Donna: Yes.

Su-Lin: And then the assessment takes place continually, and this then feeds back into the planning process?

Donna: Yes, that's right.

Su-Lin: So how often does assessment take place with the students?

Donna: At the end of every unit. I want the students to be part of the learning-teaching partnership; for me as well as for them

because for the teaching-learning process to be highly effective, which is where we should be aiming, together with the students too, have to be a partnership and the students have to have ownership of the programme and the whole learning process as well, which is why I encourage them to give as much feedback as possible. There's no point in a group of adults writing these units thinking they know the students because they have no input, they think they might want to study political theatre but they might not want to.

Su-Lin: Well, I know you haven't used the word creativity but what's your take on that? Do you see it fitting in with drama?

Donna: Oh yes, definitely. I think creativity is part of your personality, to be creative, I think. I think of myself as being a highly creative person, being involved in visual and performing arts, not only in education but personal pursuits and so forth. I think every student is creative but there's lot of difference in being creative in performance as opposed to being creative by inventing something, perhaps or working out a mathematical problem. I'm sure you still do that in a creative processbut I don't ... I think there again, I say the arts; visual and performing and the languages would allow the students to be a lot more creative than perhaps more text-book driven subjects. Not to say they can't be creative; I'm sure they are creative in technology and that kind of stuff, and they nurture skills too but when you actually see kids get up and perform on stage for people, and not even so much a big stage but a performance space, be it like dancing, playing the cello, doing a Shakespeare monologue ... I think it goes a little bit .. it goes into cutting-edge creativity.

And in the 21st century now, we can, I mean we've come such a long way since I started teaching with what we can even do in a classroom; content-wise and also technology-wise and also just how much is out there and the students are struggling to improve that I think ... I think creativity has com a long way. So students are being more creative because of technology and the improvement of the arts in industry ... things like the new Powerhouse in Brisbane, we've got the Lyric Theatre, the Entertainment Centre. I mean they're all very vital in the arts and when the students see that that's all

happening and it's part of like the average person's life now and that people can go and see a 'live' performance when 20 years ago it was probably ... it was a very priviledged experience; one due to costs and two due to attitudes because a lot of people thought the arts were snobby things in Australia whereas now you get even the non-wealthy going to the Lyric.

Su-Lin: You mentioned how things have changed in education. Do you feel that as an educator, that you are connected to your students; to this generation or is there a gap?

Donna: I personally think I've got a gap because .. of my age I suppose Because I didn't grow up on computers in school and I'm not OLD but I didn't grow up with computers at school. All my University assignments are hand-written till I did my Masters but that was the early nineties. I'm not very comfortable with working with ..... a lot of computerised equipment at this point but I know because of the area I teach in, I'm almost forced to learn more. So it's definitely on my agenda to learn more and be computer literate and to get a complete understanding of digital equipment and how to design webpages and things like that.

It's scary when you have students who can do a lot more than you can in the technology field but I don't think it's threatening or that I'm less educated than them, it's just that that's what they do now ... at Grade 2. They start with computers and can do Power Point ... I think that's fantastic but on the other hand also, I don't necessarily align creativity with technology ... that's something that I would like to explore because to me I like to hand-draw. If I'm doing like a cover sheet for a book or something, it's very quick and responsive to do a computer created cover sheet with images but you see it everywhere and to me it isn't creative, because I didn't do it with my own hands, like line-block printing for example, where it's a lot more tactile.

So I'm kind of caught in the middle because I want to do technology more; particularly in lighting and sound effects because we're kind of behind the eight ball at the moment but also wanting to nurture the students that it doesn't all have to be about technology and digital and CD-ROMs and video

games and things. That you need to keep in touch with that ..... I call it the human spirit. Like your feelings and those sorts of things, and I think the ultimate would be to have a match with that's happening - new technology and your natural creativity.

Su-Lin: Can you explain your role to me here at Springvale State. I understand you're Head of Department.

Donna: Yes, I'm Head of Department for Performing Arts, which means I am in charge of music, drama, dance and media studies. .. And also instrumental music. But I do have co-ordinators within those fields, so I have an instrumental music co-ordinator, and a junior drama co-ordinator. I co-ordinate senior, my 2 dance co-ordina-ators co-ordinate dance. So we have meetings scheduled so I touch base with all the areas. I teach as well on top of administration and management; I've got 3 classes of drama and the rest of the my time, my non-contact time with students is spent doing budgets, attending to HOD issues, planning the future, taking pre-service teachers ... there's just a huge range of things ... doing purchase orders ... organising rehearsal schedules.

The other part is spent on extra- curriculur programmes; so beyond the teaching side of it and what the students do in the classroom, there's a huge opportunity for them to become involved in lots and lots of cultual activities that are scheduled throughout the year. Things like Awards Night, assembly performances, shopping centre performances, Education Qld launches ... small presentation night performances of their class work to parents, night of dance, we're doing *Rock Eisteddfod* this year, a soire in the street, a carnival when the merge happens between the primary and high school. The students have been really good. We've got a Cultural Committee for the first time so there are 2 cultural leaders who go around assembly promoting things, write articles for the newsletter, go out into the community and promote things, do some marketing for us, sell tickets, fund-raise, ...

SL: What's your staff strength like at this Department?

Donna: I'd say I've got a mix staff of professionals who've worked in

their fields, I've got a mixture of age as well so I've got people mid-twenties to people approaching fifties. I've got a mix of ... although not as much of a balance as I would like of male and female. They come from different backgrounds, like 2 of my music teachers went to the Conservatory of Music and one went to QUT; likewise with drama and dance, they both went to QUT. But again they vary in personality, in professional background, in age, in knowledge and content so a lot of sharing happens, across faculties as well, and the good thing is that everyone has their own ideas, and background and learning but sometimes it might not work but I enjoy the times when it does work because sometimes you shut the door too early and do something one way, but the person next to you might think of something else.

So again, I think we need to do that more - team teach, watch each other teach, because you can just get caught in a cocoon, and live in a very sheltered reality whereas I'm always all-round promoting collaboration, sharing ideas, and I don't have a problem with people watching me teach at all and I'd like to think they don't have problems with me watching them teach because it's not about what are you doing wrong thing, it's a, "oh, that's a good idea".

Su-Lin: In terms of numbers, how big is the department?

Donna: I'm actually collating this information for a report, but roughly, we have 4 Year 12 drama classes, that's about 92 students, Year 11's about 80, Year 10's 62, Year 9 is 65, and all Grade 8's do drama for 1 semester. So drama numbers would be approximately 300 from Year 9 - 12, and 200 of Year 8s. So we've got 500 students doing drama.

Su-Lin: In terms of staff numbers for drama and the performing arts?

Donna: I've got, including myself, there's 11 staff; so I've got 2 dance teachers, 3 music teachers, 3 instrumental music teachers, and there's actually 5 people teaching drama but for 3 this is our focus area.

Su-Lin: Do you have a separate administrator who helps you with administration stuff?

Donna: No.

Su-Lin: And you also do playground duty and other stuff …

Donna: We also do playground duty, and I have a home group that I'm called upon to do internal supervision once a week because I'm on half a load as HOD. I've also got a Line Manager, which basically means that she meets with me, or with me and the Principal, and she's my Deputy. So there are 3 Deputy Principals, and each of the 3 Deputies have attached themselves to all HODs. And that basically means that if I have an issue or problem or something I want to do, I go to her and she is my first port of call. So we meet as much as we can, or do a lot of conversations on the phone. I have a teacher-aid for an hour and a half a week, which is a very small amount of time for the amount of students studying the subject. I mean there are a lot of menial tasks we need to do ex. sending letters to parents about this student who has not been coming for 3 weeks … so there are some tedious tasks that we all need to do that could possibly be done by someone else.

So given the size of the department, it certainly deserves a teacher-aid full-time on staff and next year I think I would even like to have more assistance on the cultural side of things. And we're trying to get our staff involved in the *Rock Eisteddfod* so that it doesn't seem like just the Performing Arts and it can be a whole school thing and that's one area I want to look into more; ensuring that other staff can be involved, that we're not an isolated team of highly creative people who aren't willing to let others share and work with us so … it's starting to work, like we've got a few teachers working with us for *Rock Eisteddfod* so I think it's starting to grow.

Su-Lin: Well obviously your department is very close but do all of you get along? Because I understand that traditionally music and visual art were the 2 …

Donna: Yes, they were the 2 arts which were traditionally taught in Queensland. Pretty much that's still the case in primary schools. That's changing but pretty much they've come a long way but in primary the focus will be on music and art. They

do ... I know Kelvin Grove State School gets an instrumental music teacher in to teach their students individually; instrument they do music and they do art and they've also got Kite Theatre based there. So they're a little bit unique in that they promote the arts and they've also got partnerships where they take their students over to the QUT dance studios where they do things as well. So that's pretty good for a primary sch. As far as getting on, because we are performers, I guess we all have quite high self-esteems and confidence, and we're all skilled in our areas. I couldn't say that we get along all the time, there are some periods of unsettlement but it might be a case where people just need some sitting down, it might be a case where we'll all just to busy to sit down and de-brief. In general, we do pull together as a team and have common goals. If they have a problem they'll come to me, and then it's up to me to solve that problem.

Su-Lin: Are the cultural activities the students do outside of curriculum time called clubs here?

Donna: We do have .. one of our music teachers does drama as well and she started up a junior drama club who meet one afternoon a week and one lunch hour, one of my dance teachers auditioned dance students from one level and chose 11 to become our dance performance group and they meet every Tuesday afternoon for an hour and a half and they choreograph pieces that we will have ready when we are invited to perform. So there are groups like that; specific groups. There's an instrumental music support group who meet once a month with their parents, we've set up a support group of parents and students for the *Rock Eisteddfod* as well.

So there are ... but they might not carry over to the next year all the time but some of them like the Drama Club took off last year and it's just growing and growing. There's a lot of opportunity to create more but it depends on the clientele. Like if we get 25 students who enrol who are great at clowning we probably will form a comedy club, you know what I mean. It sort of goes on what you get in and because Springvale has 66 feeder schools so 66 primary schools are represented here in Grade 8, so they come from everywhere, and a high percentage of Year 11s don't come from around here. And

they're prepared to travel to come and do the arts. So given that too, we've always got new clientele so depending on what their focus is, and what they're background's been, the skills they bring, and sometimes what their parents' skills are as well, that then dictates to us what to establish as new programmes.

Su-Lin: In Singapore, the students actually get points for their extra-curricular activities. Do students here get points?

Donna: No. We don't have points but what they do is get awards on Awards Night. So they can nominate themselves for Cultural Award, Service Award, a Leadership Award, those sorts of things and they'll list what they've done to fulfill the criteria and as long as they get the majority of their teachers' verification, then they will get the award. But you've given me an idea with the points, because it'll probably encourage them to commit more. Yeah. Compete against each other a little bit.

Su-Lin: You obviously have a very supportive Principal.

Donna: Yes. Ever since my arrival we've had a very positive relationship; there have been issues of concern but I've always had very positive support, and I'm positive that this facility will eventuate (new performing arts block) and that we will get as much as we can within the budget, and the fact that we're showcasing the school so much, for ex. we're doing 3 performances in 3 different venues for Education Week - dance drama and music; things like that the Principal recognises, and when the thank-you letters come from Arts Queensland, or the Premier, or other areas in in the government, that also helps

Su-Lin: Would you say the other teachers who don't do the arts are supportive as well? Do you think they understand what the department is doing?

Donna: They're definitely supportive but .... an example would be when we showcase for assemblies, and the teachers pop in as well and they always give feedback. We generally get good support at functions but because everybody is so busy with New Basics P1-12 and other general issues, we don't get a lot of teacher support for other events like for example, the *Rock Eisteddfod*. We've probably got 5 or 6 staff helping out

of 87 which is quite poor but I don't take it as a negative because look at what other areas they are doing; it's not presenting, it's not performing but different faculties have different focus areas so people are writing work programes or planning other programmes for their faculty. So that is okay with me. I would imagine that some staff of the school would think that we're being favored but that's not the truth and we're just being targeted as a key area because we are a key area and I have 850 students doing performing arts and 1200 that includes Year 8s but the fact of the matter is that they are popular at the senior school and the junior school so what goes on here has been recognised; the history of our success with the students is being recognised, and the fact that a lot of the performing arts staff dictate what happens in the rest of the school and the arts is definitely an energy base within the school.

Su-Lin: So you don't face any difficulty from the administration or time-tabling ....

Donna: No, we don't. The biggest time-tabling issue we face is space; finding enough spaces for teaching but no one is really teaching out of their area like on a half-load ....

Su-Lin: How do performances for assembly work here?

Donna: We try to have assemblies for all the 4 levels and have all the 1200 students together and most fortnights we are asked to showcase something, be it vocal, instrumental, dance or acting ... so we try and balance the 3 areas .... and the QUT students also perform so ... the positive response that I've actually got from the other faculties is that they actually look forward to going for assemblies because the speaking is balanced with the performance base as well and the students, I believe, as do their deputies, their behaviour tends to be better than what I've seen in most schools because they know they're going to be entertained.

Su-Lin: How do you view your role as a teacher and what's your philosophy for teaching?

Donna: My philosophy for teaching is to nurture students and in

whatever way I can, also incorporating drama but also beyond that, prepare them for ... life. So I see drama as a life journey anyway, like they can learn so many things from drama but I also lead into my lessons a lot of .... just content or happenings in the world and also to come to a point at the end of the 2 years to have a certain level of skills that I, as a teacher and more importantly, as a drama teacher, have instilled in them. So I take them on a journey, from Year 10 to 11 to 12, and I think that consistency is important to their learning. I think classes that have the same teachers for two years and more is better because you get to know the students more - their histories, their backgrounds, where they want to go, their futur futures. So I think my role as teacher goes way beyond content obviously, and I think I'm a role model in imparting life-skills because they have no idea about it at all. And I try to make them aware what it means being an adult; you get different role pressed upon you, you get different rules and regulations.

Su-Lin: You mentioned previously that some teachers here have formec partnerships with QUT. Is it the norm here for teachers to work with artists in the industry?

Donna: It's not a norm and it hasn't been one in the past. The idea came from the merger that is going to take place with the Junior School and Middle School and High Sch. and also the secondary school and all of us are going to the New Basic. The teachers here have a thought process where we are alongside a University where we do want to channel more students into ... and what can we do to ensure that happens in a formal way rather than just let's wander over. I began discussions with lecturers at QUT last year and so starting small and working towards 2005 and 2010. Partnerships with the Academy of the Arts have started in terms of a project involving 30 dance students from Kelvin Grove and 30 pre-service teachers from QUT, I've taken under me 2 pre-service teachers where previously I might have only taken 1, I'm also looking into starting a mentoring programme in the next couple of years where a couple of my teachers work with a couple of dance/drama pre-service teachers, drama/ music teachers so we're working in a 5 people team and the benefit that's got for pre-service teachers is that they're better prepared for the reality of the classroom, the reality of the

school, given that they might not be staying in Brisbane as well.

We've also discussed doing a joint performance at *Out of The* Box for next year. And I've also had at the beginning of the year into term 2, 2 post-graduate students from QUT working with my Year 12's, looking at drama beyond the curriculum, such as 'How the Actor Prepares'; giving them a lot of skills, and that was just like a bonus, and one of them has offered to come back in August to do workshops for 2 afternoons a week So it's happening, it's starting to happen; we're starting to grow and particularly when we get more resources so I believe start small, and then it will grow. Start small so it's more manageable and it will work, and then we'll do things as the years go by.

Su-Lin: Are there any partnerships between teachers in the Performing Arts Department and the other teachers in the school?

Donna: Only in terms of the *New Basics* and the *2010* education document and being a Trans-Disciplinary Learning School. There have been meetings between the various departments, including the arts to see how we can integrate our subjects, so we're definitely moving with the times.

Su-Lin: Do you find pre-service teachers coming in useful?

Donna: Very useful. The more I can take the better. I don't see them as baggage. I mean you do supervise them and spend time assessing with them, go over their lesson plans with them and all the other things we try and teach them about while they're here but definitely I'm learning a lot about technology from this particular pre-service teacher I have with me now; she's given me new games to play with the drama students and I don't really have the time to go and read books even though I want to The students like them because they're new, they're fresh, they're energised and they promote the whole subject area as well and basically it's keeping up with what's happening at Uni; what's working, what's not, I've used some of their tasks and incorporated some of their assessment.

Su-Lin: In terms of teacher training and upgrading of skills, is there a fund teachers can tap into and do you encourage them to go for further training?

Donna: Well unfortunately there are 2 sides to that. We call it up-skilling/professional development. I'm all for it; things are moving so fast, not just in terms of technology but with the new drama syllabus out now and just things changing, there could be a good unit happening at another school which I would hear about from fellow high school teachers, also networking with primary school teachers is very rich because we need to know what they're doing but unfortunately, the funds are very low. I did put into my budget an allocation for professional development but it's not a huge pool of money. The other thing is to release a teacher for any one day costs the department money so you have to weigh out ... can you afford to send 2 people, can 1 person go?

I guess for me I ask how beneficial is it going to be for the students. But up-skilling offers very positive experiences, positive ways of keeping the enthusiasm and passion going for teachers because you do network and the best part of doing professional development is meeting other teachers. I do believe that if you want to be an excellent teacher, then you would have to give up some of your own time. So I think as long as there is balance, and someone from the department gets to go to something once a year. I'm usually the first port of call if staff want to go for training and I get the mail so I circulate information to them but some of my staff belong to various associations where they get direct information on courses, conferences, etc.

Su-Lin: You mentioned the importance of networking. Is there an association of teachers for drama under Education Queensland?

Donna: No. But there is an immense amount of information on the web There is a website for every school which I could be updating information each month. Compared to 2 or 3 years ago, we've been pretty blessed. Like I can access different associations, different units, like the Drug and Alcohol Unit. We've got Education Views which comes out every fortnight; that's like our newsletter. There's a teacher's union and they have a type of newspaper as well and they're always asking for teachers to contribute. There's a Board of Teacher Registration newsletter that we get. So there's heaps of information and that's all teacher generated as well. I mean Ed Queensland does give

assistance; there are a lot of opporunities, you just have to take them. I mean there are opportunities for me to present at the QADIE Conference next week, I'm writing a couple of papers for the QADIE journal ... so there are lots of opportunities out there and people will start catching you from what you've put out there and then the network starts-up.

And we're all part of different districts and I go to HOD Cluster meetings and we meet at least once a term and all the Heads of the Performing Arts Departments meet and we might look at the new drama syllabus, what's coming up at year end for us, you've got to be seen and heard I guess; you've got to be part of a group. And I'd rather do that than do it all by myself. I mean why should I create a new unit if someone's written it, or someone's got an excellent video, or someone's done Sukuzi training and could come in to help me; so it's not just about further networking and resourcing as in written, but it's also about sharing resources and helping each other out, often workshops without costing money.

Su-Lin: Does the school have a counsellor?

Donna: Yes. We have 2 guidance counsellors here and they see the students not just about their subjects, but also problems at home as well. So students need to make an appointment. There's a police officer here and she works 5 days a week; from ten to two. She does a lot of education in the classroom, about traffic liscensing, drugs and alcohol, fines, that sort of thing. Very approachable and I once did a role-play with her in process drama as herself. She comes to things like the semi-formals, open days ...she's very visible and I would say her presence definitely helps keep the school on-track. If there's any bad stuff or things like that she's right onto it and puts up notices, that sort of thing.

We also have a school chaplain who offers prayer one morning a week and holds lunchtime sessions with students. We have a school nurse who comes in about 3 times a week and again, the students know when she's here and they make an appointment with her. So we don't have a psychologist or psychiatrist as such; that has been an idea put through by Ed Qld and they'll probably get to that point by putting some of

these people in schools where there is more need. I think a psychologist would be a good personnel to have in such a school; even if one was attached to a couple of schools. I think there is a definite need but it's just a matter of funding at the moment but I've never been to a school where there's not at least a school based police officer, which is becoming more and more popular; a school chaplain, nurse, couple of guidance counsellors.

I guess in drama, that's why when I work with a particular year level, and there are issues like bullying, I might address it through role-play, hotseating, things like that. And if I can teach them through a subject area, then that's fantastic. And I guess as far as my role goes, if we do see a need or if a student came to see me, then I'd make sure I channelled them to the right person in the school because we're not allowed to interfere or take the role of community service or junior aid into our own hands.

Su-Lin: Do you feel drama provides a platform, or encourages that kind of atmosphere?

Donna: Definitely. I've had experiences where doing drama opens up old wounds but also heals; I've told my students that drama is presenting to an audience, be it only 2 people or in the class, or a crowd of thousands; what has been, what can be and what will be and if you can move the audience to a point where they walk out of here either changing their minds about something, thinking in their minds about something they might have never done before, waking them up to an idea, or even having a conversation with them, about an issue or something, I think that's already a winner.

Appendix A: 3

Interview with Karen
Head of Department, Performing Arts, All Saints College
1 June 2001

Su-Lin: Why did you decide to become a teacher?

Karen: That's a long question! I came to drama education by default. I was working with youth theatres that were not school based to support myself as I trained for my bachelor of arts in Drama. So I was always keyed into drama but in what capacity, I hadn't decided. But I found working with young people in a youth theatre context very fulfilling and I also felt that I was an able teacher -I enjoyed students even at that time. I enjoyed generating a love of the arts on many levels not only through performance but actually building community through the arts. I was working with one community, quite a socially disadvantaged community, so the impact of the arts in that community particularly on the young people, affirmed for me the validity of the arts and arts education as a career.

So then I applied to do a graduate diploma in education with QUT in my third year of the BA degree, and from that experience I worked in another two high schools in disadvantaged areas as an artist-in-residence, although I had an also had a formal educational framework supporting me. In the following year I did my graduate diploma practicum. At an innovative college dealing with very complex social problems, so I really had an opportunity to look power of the arts in generating acceptance of difference and understanding of community , culture and identity, again with young people. So that's how I ended up teaching.

Su-Lin: So you did teaching studies at QUT? They did have that at that time?

Karen: Yes, and that was the time the new Queensland drama syllabus was being developed. So even though I was trained in the old state syllabus, the new one was being developed in my graduate year. So we were a cross-over year group. So I went out teaching on the old one, which was called "theatre", at the first school I taught at, then moved into the new "drama" syllabus. I was very active at that time myself in that professional change-over so I was really connected to that pedagogical change. That was 1991, when I was doing my Graduate Diploma.

Su-Lin: So how do you view your role as a teacher?

Karen: I've got probably 3 levels to my educational philosophy. The first would be a broad educational philosophy concerning the role of education in the development of a person, and secondly their understanding of self and culture. And the final dimension would be the important role the arts play in actually creating a powerful educational experience for young people. So I see myself as someone who has the ability to develop strong educational outcomes for young people to enable them to be empowered to act critically, socially in the communities they are working. So in a school like this where a lot of the kids come from privileged backgrounds, socially very positive backgrounds, where they are well loved and well looked after, I see my role as to challenge the notion of privilege and for them to understand at what cost to the whole community to maintain certain cultural constructions and how they may play a part in maintaining perhaps an oppressive construct. This can be very challenging for students who have had such a lovely, privileged life.

And for those students who come here from other cultures – it's a very multicultural community – trying to negotiate cultural identity, what does it mean to be Australian, and the role of the arts in creating a dynamic and flexible identity for young people and for culture.

How successful I am I don't know but I can and do try and assess this from time to time. One level to measure this success is the way I support students into the arts industry so there is also a vocational dimension that can be evaluated, getting students to participate in the arts once they've left school is important as well as personal development which is much more difficult to quantify.

Su-Lin: What do you think is drama's role in education?

Karen: As a drama teacher I would say everyone should be doing drama; it is essential from grade 1 – 12! But in reality, I think it's role in contemporary education is as one of the few subjects that might be aligned to cultural studies. Students in the rest of their educational program are still dealing with very content based subjects and whilst drama also has a strong content discipline, the drama classroom is a place to examine social history, social constructs, community cultural development, communication, ethics and values and technology in relation to,

for example government policies ... this is where it has a critical role.

I would say that drama is the only subject for a lot of students where they examine themselves in their wider context; how do they belong in the wider community and how will they enter their community context as citizens and how are they seen in the community as young people. Drama is also looking at their own development; how did they get to this point and what are the kind of people they would like to be. So there is definitely that element of personal development. Not in the context of work done in Australia in the 60s which was more along the lines of this is the way to be developed personally – these are the things you need to be to be well-adjusted and developed, rather drama as a subject now is looking at how young people can develop their own sense of values and identity by actually challenging some of their existing values through drama.

Again, with each student there might be different emphasis according to their needs. If you have a very capable group who are very comfortable with the dramatic form, then using their strengths in practice might be a really important way of challenging their notion of identity. But then you might have a group that is really culturally aware but who struggle with the form so developing their ability to utilize drama to express their values may be the focus. So you need to work according to the needs of each student and group.

Su-Lin: What would you say are some of the outcomes of being educated in drama?

Karen: Having a cultural understanding; so being aware of what it means to belong to your particular cultural group, having an ability to be socially critical on every level; an ability to evaluate community cultural constructs in policy, film, television, media, multi-media, to developing critical reflection and assessment of the stuff that you receive when you develop culture and identity, or that are already in cultures as you are moving through them. A sense of valuing yourself and a sense of values. Obviously in this Christian context there is a value system that is quite explicit but there is room in drama to explore alternatives and to validate value systems, critique value systems so they become something that are owned by the students. So critical social awareness, cultural awareness, self-awareness.

And obviously there's a huge impact on literacy as well. In our

course particularly there's high level of literacy skills to teach and that are developed through the class activities, and we're supported by other subjects which are also highly focused on literacy and literacy development. There's a level of literacy that's required in this school to succeed.

And emotional intelligence. I think today's lessons require teachers to challenge students to be looking at what does it mean to be engaged with both your cognitive and emotional intelligence to create art. I think a lot of students are able to understand what is going on but to struggle engage the feeling elements, the aesthetic elements in their work as artists; in this year 11 group it's a trust issue. There's a huge trust block in the year 11 classroom that we are still working through. This limits their ability to engage cognitively and affectively with the work.

Su-Lin: What does an aesthetic education mean to you? How do you define it personally?

Karen: Bearing in mind all the discussion so far, the way I think of it as a practitioner in the classroom experience is it engages human beings on all the levels that they are engaged in normal life, everyday life but particularly heightening the affective domain. Linking the intellectual, cognitive to the affective or emotional intelligences, making the experiences kinesthetic but with the aim of creating very holistic understanding of human experience. So an aesthetic experience cannot be one that is just understood or just felt. So I'm trying to give my students confidence in the feeling levels in their lives as part of their intellectual and cognitive experience. They're already building on that from each other, but making my role is making that a conscious part of the educational process.

Su-Lin: Does this school have a counselor or psychologist?

Karen: Yes. We have four full-time counselors, which is very unusual for a school of this size. It's a large number. Teachers also have a pastoral care role, which means that those students who are in my own home class group, I teach them drama but also see them everyday in a pastoral care situation for a half a period; it's not a lot, and it's been reduced as the years have gone on and that's a shame but that's one of the reasons why I do know my students so well by this time of the year. As a pastoral care teacher I can have a more active involvement and awareness of other aspects of their life which could impact upon the drama in a small group.

Su-Lin: Is it difficult to teach, and then have to support them in a counseling way as well?

Karen: I'm really conscious with the drama work because I don't support all of them in that formal pastoral care role. Therefore in the drama work we do, I structure the activities in such a way that even if it's a deeply personal issue, I actively de-personalize it through the de-briefing process and distancing the students through role because I don't feel that students are obliged to reveal anything deeply personal in a classroom context. However in a drama class they might be moved by issues to want to discuss these, and I have to be prepared to deal with that effectively.

And I've had in the past, students being stimulated to quite want to talk about personal issues. And I have the professional responsibility to either indicate to them that I can't support them in a way that they might want; so I might have to assist them in finding the appropriate counselor and I've done that on a number of occasions, and I would never take on it board as if I were a counselor as that is something that is outside of my jurisdiction as teacher. Because it is not appropriate and I'm not trained in psychological counseling so if very personal issues emerge in any classroom it is my role to support the student by assisting them in receiving more professional support. And of course student disclosure can happen to teachers in every subject. Students have emotional events in their lives and teachers play the role of a nurturer. So you can nurture but you don't have to be a counselor. I'm very conscious of that particularly because we're very provocative in our drama work. And we have to take responsibility for that and so all the more reason to be careful.

However, students have found it useful to talk about material that they can't necessarily talk about in another context and they don't need to talk about themselves but a personal journey comes through the discovery about themselves within the drama process.

Su-Lin: Could you describe for me your role in this school.

Karen: I'm the Head of Performing Arts which involves teaching 6 classes, which is quite a high teaching load for a HOD. I'm responsible for 9 faculty, that involves curriculum music as well as drama. My role as an administrator is to ensure that teachers can facilitate effective curriculum and my main goal is to

develop effective curriculum, resource effective curriculum, professionally develop teachers and also provide professional support for those teachers through managing capital and physical resources or whatever they need, and i also to deal with interpersonal relationships, discipline issues in the department; that is if teachers aren't able to manage them fully without support or if there is a sticky issue that emerges, then my role is to come up with strategies with that teacher or deal with the student myself.

I see myself as a role model in terms of professional practice, so I try to maintain a very high level of professional practice myself so that that can be seen as a model. I trust the professionalism of my own faculty, so I try not to be intrusive or directorial in my role as HOD but I pro-actively develop constant communication with and between my faculty through group meetings, one-on-one meetings each week so that I can ensure that they are feeling that they have that professional support. I would like to be seen as a professional supportive colleague and not a supervisor watching their classes or checking on them. I would only deliberately observe colleagues who are first year teachers and only if invited to participate in their lesson. I would develop lessons with a teacher if they were stuck or trying new ideas. We have a very collegial attitude towards planning, for example, there are two of us taking senior drama and we write together all our units of work and we would share all of our lessons; that collegial approach is really important.

Then there's budgets and I'm also the representative for the arts to the wider college community so that means I have to be an advocate for the performing arts on every level, so politically, personally, and professionally I always have to appear to be a good and effective advocate. And I'm also the advocate and representative for the school and my teachers in a wider professional context. So I'm very involved professionally, particularly in QADIE which means contributing to professional swap-shops and inviting people to see our work, and viewing other teacher's work and support other teachers.

I spend a lot of time working with beginning teachers. I think pre-service education is one of my essential obligations and I really enjoy the role of mentoring pre-service education students and developing mentoring in drama was the focus for my masters of education. I still spend a lot of time with my mentees. Once teachers have left their pre-service situation here; I talk to them on the phone and check work for them, and when their

school is setting up drama programs, I spend a fair bit of time putting together resource packages for them - collating and sending all the resources that we have that I can share with them. That can be a time consuming thing but I think is really important developing professional collegiality and for networking. It establishes a much stronger connection between all of the schools regardless of the system so that the subject itself is in a way sustained across the state. Drama and the arts are those areas that could always be threatened by rationalization so you need to have a strong professional network and a strong teaching culture.

Su-Lin: How would you split up your week in terms of time spent doing the various roles?

Karen: I think I'm paid to do a 30-hr week. My official week is five forty- minute periods allocated to my HOD position, two, forty-minute periods allocated to co-curricular and all the other periods are teaching periods and 20% of my teaching allocation is kept free for marking and preparation. Our week is 9 periods a day for 5 days. So that is the official breakdown. Then, I would spend on top of that, if there were a co-curricular production then I might spend up to 8 or 9 hours a week on that as well. I would probably have about 6 – 8 meetings of about 40 minutes a week with different people in different contexts, and that might be a phone call too, it might not be face-to-face.

I spend during the day, sending out about 30 – 50 e-mails, probably about 20 on average depending on what's going on, and I receive about that and that includes students and parents, and I access my department teachers that way; students access teachers that way as well and because as a department we're geographically disparate -spread over the college, people teaching my subject are everywhere, e-mail's very central in maintaining a sense of belonging, department identity.

I would spend about a tenth of my day dealing with pastoral care issues, so looking after kids, having formal and informal meetings with kids. I am the mentor for 5 senior students. We have a mentor access program which means that the students can access me as a teacher for professional support, personal support, and that can get time consuming because one of them is the school captain, and the other 4 are performing arts students. So they're always coming and going and my job is to support them. I'm on the school activities team which organizes the school calendar which is a coup because we put so much into

the school calendar and now we have been given a voice in the discussion regarding what goes on and off the calendar which is really great, but that's another chunk of time. It's allocated a period a week probably. When I've got a pre-service teacher it's probably at least an hour a day. And all of this is on a weekly basis.

I'm really conscious in doing my work at school so I don't take it home unless it's the heavy marking period but I don't get any time to do my personal planning and marking during official school hours.

I'm here by quarter to eight at the latest and I would very rarely leave before 5pm, 5.30 pm and quite often if all of these things are happening at once, it might be two or three 9pm finishes and that would be it for a couple of weeks so I definitely have those days, and this does not include those days when we've got rehearsals when I stay till 8 or 9 o'clock every afternoon. So during heavy rehearsal periods I might spend every evening a week here. And we do theatre excursions for the senior year, so that's 6pm to 10pm. So that's another chunk of things we do. And professionally I get involved on the weekends with in-service and professional development activities and that's one of the reasons why I resigned as vice president of my professional association because for a while there I was studying still, was on the management committee for the professional association, running a musical and it was my first year as HOD here. It was madness.

I'm on also on the district panel. I think is really important to be on the community panel. That's not too bad, that's only a couple of times a year.

Su-Lin: And you teach geography as well?

Karen: Yes. That's just one class, so 4 periods a week and that's included in my teaching periods. All the others are drama classes.

Su-Lin: How would you describe the students here generally in this school?

Karen: There's over 55 cultural groups so they're a diverse cultural community but they're all predominantly supportive of a Christian ethos. So even if they come from a different cultural background they often have a similar perspective on Christianity.

Some students are here because of the academic advantage which in their mind may have nothing specifically to do with the ethos of the college. So there are a large percentage of students who are here because of their high academic standards. They feel that by doing their senior education here that they will achieve a high academic result. There are a percentage of students who are here because they can afford to be here and choose it because it's a co educational college. Most students' parents support it because it's a co-educational situation and a private situation. Parents and students really like that and the great support for positive relationships between men and women here, which is a big part of the school culture.

Many of the students here have traveled or lived overseas so they have a perception of global contexts, and lived experiences which are very diverse. Then there are students who have lived on cattle stations their whole lives and never been to Brisbane, and Papua New Guinea kids who come from the highlands and have never been to the city. So you have these weird and wonderful friendship connections but all diverse schools have similar stories.

The school used to be selective in its enrolment and much smaller which means that you were here because of academic results, cultural or sporting excellence, and/or a Lutheran connection. Now enrollment is more open so the college is much larger and will almost take anyone who is willing to pay the fees and abide by the college culture. So that has changed the cultural dynamics of the college now that there's not so much a tight control over who's enrolled we've got a much broader representation of academic abilities and that trend is growing. The rather privileged, elite group of academic students who used to come here are still here but there's a much broader variety of students and that's reflected in the subjects offered and chosen. There are still the "academic" subjects but there's a lot more vocational components to the college curriculum now which is a philosophical change.

Su-Lin: Would you say they are mostly middle class and upper?

Karen: Yes. And the feeder area would be middle and upper class students. Definitely. And if they're not, they're here on scholarship. We offer a reasonably large percentage of scholarships.

Su-Lin: There's obviously a lot of support for the arts here, an example being the no. of staff. What other forms of support could you list?

Karen: Generous re-current budget; our capital budget is limited and our physical resources aren't that impressive considering the fees students pay; our rooms are very old and they're funny little buildings but the re-current budget is very good so I can employ artists-in-residence. I get $5000 allocated to a senior performance which incorporates two artists over a period of time which is fantastic and provides the seniors with the opportunity to have a very real industry performance experience in year 12.

Cultural events are given high priority on the calendar which means being incorporated into the school's daily life and being seen as part of the school's daily life. Some time-table support for my extra duties that I'm involved in professionally, because I've had to take a co-curricular component. It isn't formally recognized although I get some relief on my time-table. We get paid an honorarium for co-curricular involvement now, as of this year which is good; but it brings with it a whole lot of ethical issues regarding our roles. Also if you constantly take on the extra things you can be taking time away from your family or other people in your life. Having some kind of remuneration can be a positive but can also make you feel obliged to do more.

There's a general culture of acknowledging the academic component for the arts subjects so we're not battling the idea that doing drama is doing an easy subject and we've had to be really active to maintain that perception as the school population changes. Unfortunately, as the school population changes the broader culture changes in terms of the academic nature of all the subjects and this does not just affect the arts.

We are having to cater to a broader range of abilities and most programs still don't, to be perfectly honest. We are still top-heavy but that is changing so the courses will have to accommodate a broader range of students but our concern is losing that top range of students who will perceive the change and maybe they'll start following each other and go into physics or chemistry instead of taking a risk and taking an arts subject because they already have that traditional perception of the arts as a non-academic choice. So we're very lucky to regularly have one or two of the top exiting students doing drama which is not common in drama but we have that academic tradition and we

want to maintain it. And we're also concerned about doing justice for students who are taking our subject for different reasons and with different abilities so it's up to us to come to terms with dealing with a wider spectrum.

Su-Lin: What about in terms of physical resources?

Karen: We have 2 drama rooms and we also have a storeroom. We have also a large teaching room directly above administration. It's the school's original assembly hall from the 40s. It has a fixed stage and it's actually not a bad performance area with a high ceiling and it's a nice space but the noise became unmanageable. That's now used only after-hours and for a couple of classes a week. We've also just converted a double classroom and that's being turned into a studio space so it has lighting bars, black curtains ... we're still getting all the bits and pieces. So we'll actually have a more functional studio space so the students can do workshops in a more conventional classroom but do their assessment in a more evocative space, a and more professional space too because of the lighting etc. That we have, we have quite good technological equipment which we don't really use during class time because it's not a specific focus in the senior curriculum but we do have big co-curricular projects so that's where the interested students are taught those skills and they like to do the cross-over into their classroom work themselves.

The rest of the arts are situated all over college. The string instruments are kept in another cottage, in another building are two music rooms for lessons and where the bands are – stage band, concert band. I think there are an extraordinary number of ensembles here. There's a huge number of students doing music. There's also a classroom for drama where the year 8's do their drama. Then at the opposite end of the school there's a music classroom. In the middle school there's a chorale rehearsal room which is a large room that also doubles up for a music classroom as well, though it's not really designed to be a music classroom. The chorale is a mass choir of one hundred and twenty kids who travel overseas a lot and are a big deal, highly regarded. And then there is a music staff room which is for combined curricular and co-curricular music teachers.

The college is trying to build a performing arts building but ... it's been mooted and they were supposed to start building in 1995 but they haven't started yet. So we're still waiting. At this stage, the school has made a commitment to it; they've probably

made the most explicit commitment to it since '95 for 2003 when construction begins. So we'll wait and see. And the plan is to bring all of us together into a shared space, drama, music and the co-curricular aspects of drama and music, probably dance as well.

Su-Lin: Does this mean that the staff are located all over as well?

Karen: Yes. So the staff are everywhere. I have six drama staff 3 of us in my staff room, the 2 teachers in the middle school are based there and then there's one who is also a dance teacher and she is in the P.E. staff room, then the classroom music teachers are down in the music staff room, and part of my responsibility is to liaise with curriculum down in the junior school which is a whole separate campus sort of down there. Which is why e-mail has been such an amazing thing for me, it's important in keeping cohesion in the department. And I can't ever meet them all in one day because of the complex schedules, so I might run three meetings in a week where people come and I stay in my office over lunchtime or a specific period for three days.

I write a memo from my office, a kind of newsletter for the department which I circulate which has 'action' and 'items' and then I just deal with individual people through their 'action'. And I use the whole school newsletter to communicate to faculty or community and I'm really active in that. It used to be just for sport, and tuckshop etc. But it has become, much to the chagrin of the typist, a big vehicle for performing arts. I write a regular column and that idea was then picked up by other departments who also began to include regular columns ex. film and TV and so now it has gone back to mainly just sports and tuckshop because it was too large and becoming too much work for the admin. But I still contribute regularly.

And we have an intranet system that the kids are using more often than we are using it ourselves, and through that I think we'll build up other avenues as teachers technical confidence grows. For example we use digital cameras to record classwork and production experiences and place them on the intranet. It's still ad-hoc and not enough to be called central to our program but the college is allowing us to develop those areas which is really good. So the lap-tap is another essential resource that has been made available to all teachers.

Su-Lin: Is music the largest area in the arts in this school?

Karen: In terms of co-curriculum, yes. Music and sport are the biggest areas. In terms of curriculum, drama is a much larger elective than the music curriculum. Music curriculum is still a very small subject past year 10. But that's growing as we're trying really hard to incorporate music technology into the curriculum which is a big attraction to students; being able to record, and compose, and work in a technological framework has attracted more and more students. We still have nice healthy class sizes in music compared to other schools but overall it's still a small elective. It's quite interesting that so many students are involved in music but so few study it.

Dance is only for year 8 so when we get the building, we're hoping to get it as a subject area here. And those plans will eventuate but not till we get this new facility.

Art and media are under art, or visual art and design. So there's Art and then there's Performing Arts which incorporates Music, Dance, Drama.

Su-Lin: Is the enrolment for visual arts and performing arts comparable?

Karen: Drama is larger than film and television, film and television is larger than music, visual art is larger than drama. So Art is the biggest elective and they have their own block too which means they can manage a larger enrollment. But our drama and visual art classes would be comparable in terms of senior numbers, in 11 and 12 . We actually work very closely together and develop shared curriculum and we're very close to the Art department. So drama and visual art would be the top 2 arts electives, maybe visual art a little bit larger. I don't know actually. We'd be close.

Su-Lin: What's the population for drama? Do you know off-hand?

Karen: I can give rough figures. This year there is 55 in year 12, 70 in year 11, there is a total of 620 students in the senior school. All year 8s do drama and music, that's 270, four drama classes in year 9 which is about 120, and another 4 classes in year 10 which is 120. So about 350 kids in the senior school and as well as the year 8s from the middle school.

They elect for drama in year 9. In terms of percentage, we're got 600 students in years 11 and 12, and 120 are doing drama. That's not bad. And then the totals, there's about 270 in year 8, about 250 in year 9, about 250 in year 10, 300 year 11, 300 year 12. So about half do drama.

Su-Lin: What about staff numbers for performing arts?

Karen: Gosh, there'll be a lot of us involved in the arts. Probably 25 – 30 including supporting staff or teacher aides. If you look at co-curriculum music, yes, it'll be closer to 50 faculty because you've got 28 teachers who come just for instrumental teaching, and 3 full-time band and group leaders. We have a head of strings, and head of band, and head of chorale - he doubles as head of co-curricular music it is a big school and almost everyone's involved in the arts so ... in some capacity.

Su-Lin: Could you venture why?

Karen: The college actually has a strong tradition of valuing the arts. In Australia, music particularly has been seen as part of a well-rounded private school education. So if you go to a private school you are expected to play footy and you sing in a choir and you ... at most schools you either play footy or sing in a choir but here, in this school, there's been a lot of students who play footy and sing in the choir or play the cello and are the captain of the volleyball team. So that's why the kids are committed to both sport and music or performing arts.

In our last dramatic production, the head of the first 15 football team was a featured performer, that sorts of thing, and it's the same at Villanova College (an all boys catholic college) where the boys are encouraged to participate in a broader range of activities and not just sport. That means that there are more young people who are willing to be involved. So you've got that middle-upper class vision of a: "it's the right thing to do an arts subject", and the support amongst students and parents is also due to the work of the performing arts head before me, for about 10 years, there's been intensive drama programs, and really committed people who've wanted to work at a really high level and, after 10 years, I do think you develop a culture and we bring in new teachers who've got the same attitude about it.

Su-Lin: Would you say you involve the community a lot in your programs?

Karen: Definitely parents. The wider community are not necessarily as actively engaged. We've got about 5 or 6 mothers who are fully engaged. They work with us in a completely volunteer capacity and they give so much time, so there's the really intensive support but generally the support comes more from the community attendance; they'll come for the students' events.

Parents are very conscious of the curriculum here, they're still very aware of the fundamentally academic outcomes which are very important, so they're really onto you if they're not comfortable with how the students are progressing so you do have that rigorous involvement. I've always had that kind of support which I think is positive. Parents here allow students to take it in their junior years and then into their senior years, that's a cultural advantage .. that's hard for some parents to accept that their children want to do drama to senior exit particularly. They can accept music more readily than they can accept drama. But they still allow it because there's the reputation of the college which have had academic students do well in drama and so they keep allowing it to happen.

Some of our best academic students in year 10, if we get a sense that they're not going to come onboard, we would be pro-active and ring their parents and try and persuade them to see that their children are multi-talented and they could manage physics and drama. But that does not always happen, for example the international students have different educational agendas and they (and their parents) are not always as supportive of the students taking arts subjects into their senior years, although they might be for co-curricular events. They might be willing to come along and see the other events.

Su-Lin: Is classroom work showcased to parents?

Karen: Yes, it is but perhaps not as much as it might be in a smaller school context. The sheer size, and then the lack of facility means that we do have a year 11 showcase and a year 12 showcase at the end of the year which is really popular and it's over 2 nights. The year 12s generally do a major public performance. That's another component as well. I tend to be of the mind-set that I don't want parents to see their kids perform till they're ready to share. I like the year 9s to perform for junior school or I work with the junior school and the year 9's in a process drama together.

I might get 10s to perform on 1 night a year but only really polished work or I might get them to perform as part of presentation right (for about 1500 family and friends of the college) at the end of the year. In terms of classroom work, I would love to do more co-class sharing and we're starting more and more to incorporate drama activities during the lunch-hours. This is a really busy place, and this additional expectation of performance is just 'another thing' on already loaded plates, and

there's just so much going on, you just have to rationalize. We're very lucky to have the supportive culture.

The stuff going on in the classrooms is spread by word of mouth, the excellent things that are going on. I would prefer to maintain this than show average classroom practice for the sake of more sharing in the community. Curriculum rigor has always been my main objective and as long as it's good, the kids are enjoying it, and it's being well supported then we are successful... I think that's a wonderful spin-off in a place like this, in a school environment which appreciates excellence in arts beyond the performance outcome.

We also have a student theatre company; a fully run student company who produce at least 1 play a year. I liaise with them and supervise them but they do it. And that's been running for 3 years now. It used to come and go in the past, depending on the students running it but it's building a reputation now. It only involves about 15 – 20 kids. It's fully student run so that's a lot of commitment, without teacher direction. So the top kids often take it on board.

Su-Lin: So the end-of-year performances for the parents are done here in school?

Karen: Yes, in that little hall which sits about 110. But for the year 12 performance which takes place in the third term, happens in another venue. I take them off campus so we usually use the Metro Arts Theatre in the city because it's an intimate space with a great atmosphere. The parents kind of enjoy it and it gives the students a feeling of ownership.

Su-Lin: And there's 1 major co-curricular production a year?

Karen: Yes, 1 mega-production a year. We produced a production at the Visy theatre, Brisbane Powerhouse this year with much success. I'm also involved in Stage-X in a performance season called XLD (excellence in drama and dance from schools). The festival is also at the powerhouse at the end of the year. Some students from here were performing but I've canceled that because that's when I'm due to have the baby. However I'm still one of the facilitators of the festival and running a youth forum as part of the week but normally I would find projects like that for student performance throughout the year.

We just made a film with the human rights commission on

immigration. The students and I wrote and directed it and then the film crew came and filmed it on campus. We've done that 3 times, since '95 and that again, was about 20 students involved in that. And the students have been good in sharing opportunities like that around so that's another example of drama's connection with the wider community activities.

I would professionally just get bored silly if all the performance work the students were involved with was institutionalized or school based, I like to be involved in the wider theatre industry, and to keep meeting people who might employ our students. It is important for me professionally to compare our student's standards of work to the professional industry standard. I mean it's really tough, but we expect our best student's work to be comparable, they are moving into a tertiary level, many are at a tertiary level already, they are already ready for that transition and are at a very high professional level as performers, technicians etc.. but we can expect that because they're the kind of kids we already have here at the college.

I don't work like that in another teaching context, I might have a totally different agenda with different students but while I'm here, I feel obliged to create experiences that will push them to that level.

Su-Lin: Wow! You're incredibly busy.

Karen: Yes. It is a lot. It doesn't feel like a lot when we're doing it but yes, it is a lot. But there is a similar culture and work practice elsewhere, I mean a few of us came out of QADIE at the same time and we all like to work and have that kind of professional commitment to us. And it's come from amazing role models like Judith and Christine and from people who take what we do incredibly seriously. So you've got the feeling that you have take the opportunity to move forward and will be encouraged to take yourself and your work that seriously.

And we all love the arts; we all have arts-based lives and we all want to keep making that our lives and not just a job. It's a passion, and depending on the school, and whichever school I've been, it's always about getting the best according to students needs, that's how I work. And if I'm lucky enough to be in a school that has the money and the students to work in a highly professional way ... and I am lucky here. There are the struggles but there's lots to counter-balance that so you don't get so overwhelmed by the struggles and you spend a lot more

time being rewarded for your advocacy which motivates me to keep on going.

Su-Lin: Do you have to handle all the administration work yourself?

Karen: Yes. I don't have to create the school time-table but I have to liaise with the person who does it. I don't have to do absenteeism, we have a officer who does that. We have 2 punative disciplinarians which i don't use very often unless it's for theft, and they are useful for teachers at time for example if you catch a student smoking, and you don't have time to follow it up, you can hand that over to someone else. I have to do parent-teacher issues like every other teacher. I do the newsletter and other school publications and I might be the facilitator of other people writing things so I might have to chase the copy but I might not have to generate all the copy necessarily. And if I've been asked to write for publications, I might get someone else to write because it's their project.

I've been asked to contribute in the Curriculum Council so I have a responsibility in representing the performing arts in this school. The Curriculum Council is a discussion group who focus on the school philosophy. It is attended by all the HODs.

As well as this there is just general administration, photocopying ... I get 10 hours a week of teacher aid time which is good but that's not comparable to math or science, they've got more but compared to other schools, it's great. So that's the reality. And that person does all my purchasing. So I'll order but that person takes it over from there which is really good so I'm not running around. So I sign order books everyday and I'm writing up order forms but I don't have to chase that. The purchase of theatre scripts are also taken care of by that person so I book them but they're all the details of cataloging etc. are managed by the teacher aid.

Su-Lin: Are the students in the co-curricular production all drama students?

Karen: Majority, but not all. And they're not all the best. There are some students who can't make the schedule even though they make the cast through the audition. We quite consciously take on board students who we think will benefit from positive peer support so it's not the same group over and over again. There are certain students who over the years have been through the productions but there are quite different groups of students each

year usually.

It's not a drama class club. We hold auditions. About 250 students showed an interest in our production this year but when we told them what it was about, and what it was, only about 40 or 50 turned up for the auditions. And then that dropped down to about 20. And a lot of the students who didn't get in as performers became involved in other capacities.

Su-Lin: I wanted to ask you about teacher training. Are there a fixed number of hours each year that a teacher needs to fulfill?

Karen: I think the college is required to offer us, or construct for us 4 days, and I think there's a percentage of those 4 days which needs to be in professional development but a lot of people do a 2-day course, like the QADIE conference in their own time. Which means that you can do other things on those 4 days. I think there's a percentage, like 1% maybe of your wage that needs to be spent on professional training for the whole faculty. It's a fairly high number from the payroll that has been allocated to professional training for faculty and staff. Things that this is spent on ....like we all have a first aid certificate, we all have to go through work health and safety, and we all might go to a curriculum thing like a ... we've all got to do technology course in Powerpoint or Word because we've all got to become computer literate. So there are a few that are compulsory, then there's a fair amount of support for you to attend in your own time but not during school time, they're quite restrictive about that which is the case in all schools, I think.

Su-Lin: As a HOD, do you encourage your teachers to go for training? Do you get the material for them ...

Karen: Yes. I get it for them or I might find out what's happening for the year and I might go: "ok, this is on, this is really good, do you want to go?" If it's general, I might put the form on someone's table, and say do you want to come with me to this? If it's something related to our curriculum, I might encourage them to go and I might go with them, or set it up for them but mostly .. I mean I'm really lucky to have a good relationship with my faculty, they're very honest about what they want to attend and it's a very busy school so sometimes they don't want to go.

I don't see the need to have constant professional development activities that are so formalized that they drive everyone nuts

anyway. I'm very in the mode that I work with professionals who most of the time behave professionally, sometimes they don't but we all do our best to behave in an independent, collegial way, and if we don't, then the problems emerge, and we deal with the problems and resolve the issues but I'm not going to say: "you all should do this".

Su-Lin: Do you run any training for teachers?

Karen: Personally, I run in-service for primary teachers in drama because they're really keen in having it at this college, and I would have presented at QADIE every year now for about 8 years or every second year for those 8 years and I've presented nationally 3 times. I go for every national conference myself and when I was vice-president of QADIE and National Liaison Officer for Queensland that was in a formal capacity and I would go personally and the school supports me by paying my registration and $80 a day.

I run in-servicing for the new syllabus, the new arts syllabus for my faculty but that's really more a dissemination of information and I do that a lot. So if something comes up, I take time communicating that to other people. Not quite in-service but professional information sharing and not everyone responds but for those who do, it's out there. And I create resource files when my pre-service teachers are here or for anyone who's here, this includes developing resources files with a lot of professional reading and an extensive professional library. That's another great thing. We have a lot of support for our teacher reference library development which becomes a permanent resource.

The main philosophy I have is, I guess you have to be an active advocate to maintain integrity, and maintain the support and in the arts, to pretend that it's just going to be there forever is not real in any arts context. You must be willing to work. It's like doing corporate sponsorship for a company. It doesn't come every year. You have to work the same people every year, or different people every year or a different company, and there's never going to be a completely secure time in the arts or art education... you just have to become more capable of playing games, politically and professionally and it's the same in education and especially in the context of building it up, you really need people who are willing to commit like that, unless it's imposed by the state. There's an element which is really good in that but it really won't get up culturally unless it comes from within as well, and is allowed to evolve I think, from the

people who are there.

The culture here is something that has evolved in the arts, and I think the constant evolution is what keeps us going but that's how we do it here, but this culture wouldn't necessarily be sustained elsewhere. So we're lucky to have had that evolution. But it feels like it's still evolving. I think we're a lot more aware of what's been left undone, what needs to be done, like the junior curriculum, and how we're adapting that and the time-table ....

Su-Lin: Just to clarify, you're in charge of all the year levels?

Karen: Yes, from 1 – 12. Junior school from 1 – 5, middle school is from 6 – 8, then there's the junior program which is 9 and 10, and senior program is 11 and 12. But there's no formal curriculum for the junior school so I do the in-service in the primary school, so I know the teachers who are using drama. I, this year supervised a primary pre-service teacher so I actually liaised directly with the teacher and with her. She was from Michigan, so that was great, she's another overseas placement. We wrote stuff together and she taught that. I didn't get to be as connected with her as I might have had I been physically closer to the junior school but it was fine, she had a good experience. And I run 2 projects taking the year 9 and 10s into the junior school.

I work closely with the junior school principal and he really responds. He loves the drama stuff and really responds to the work we do. And with the middle school guy, the middle school principal, I work closely with him in developing time-table and curriculum. I'm fully responsible for developing class groups and the allocation of rooms because we have a cycle system in the performing arts where the students do a different unit each term in music, drama, dance.

Su-Lin: So from year 1 – 7, drama is used more as a teaching methodology?

Karen: Yeah, but it would be more from 1 – 5 more as a teaching methodology, 7 it's a subject for 1 period a week, year 8 it's 2 periods a week, year 6 it's sort of; I've encouraged it to be built in into the English language arts program, but it's not formally separate as a subject - a separate discipline but yes, I'd say it's more of a teaching tool in the primary then it is in the middle.

In the middle it becomes a separate discipline but not separate enough, but that's just my opinion! So I would like it to be much more ... I mean I would be happy to integrate it in curriculum structure, and unitize it or link it to SOSE (Studies of Society and the Environment) or language or Christian knowledge or whatever, but I'd like it to be seen as to be something on its own too. But that requires someone like Sandra Gattenhof in the school. It requires that kind of level, a specialist, someone who as an educator can link the curriculum ... so as a HOD I have my vision and if I had the means, or someone like me who was available time wise, then I'm sure I could get it up and going more efficiently in the middle and junior school but there isn't anyone with that time so generalist teachers have taken on the major organization of the curriculum subject, it's not fair to ask them to do more, it's not real considering their huge workloads and school expectations.

Su-Lin: You mentioned earlier that you bring in artists, like artists-in-residence?

Karen: Yes. We've had physical theatre specialists for example, I've worked with Anna Yen on a number of occasions and I directed a show with Anna outside of school with the Hereford Sisters with Backbone Youth Arts, 2 – 3 years ago now. We've had 2 dramaturgs, two playwrights, a forum theatre specialist who worked with our 12s for 3 weeks last year which is quite a long secondment. This is in the last 2 years. And residence time varies from a singe day or several days or every lesson for 3 weeks.

Su-Lin: When they come in do they usually take over the lesson?

Karen: Yes, but we work in tandem. So I probably plan with Anna, what are you going to do? And I follow that up the next time I see her and I generally use artists that I'm familiar with as well; people I either have worked with or I know their work so that I can actually sustain a professional connection. I always see them as an enhancement of the curriculum process so I don't bring people in who I think are just different versions of me, rather they should contribute a level of expertise that the students can immediately appreciate.

Although a lot of the time I think artists that work with young people tend to do the same thing as teachers do but for the students it often has that lovely integrity you loose in classroom practice when it's coming from an "artist". I invited an artist from backbone to come and speak to the kids to get them

involved in backbone a bit, acting academy, a lot of kids are involved in that but they don't come up as much. So if we're doing something, and we happen to know someone, then we try and get that real connection with outside organizations and artists, and a lot of times the students don't realize that they're working with highly regarded artists because they get used to it. They don't realize that they're really lucky to have a school that supports that industry and education link.

And this is very active in the visual arts department as well and I think that's why they're the predominant arts elective ... because there's a culture of bringing artists in and students benefit so much from making links and stuff and it's so wonderful that the kids are working like that.

Even for our lighting or technology training and supervision, we often use people who are specialists, like film and TV supervisors, or artists, or professionals and the kids end up working with them.

You know the guys who have done our lighting support for production have ended up employing our students. We end up with a nice networking process and we're all (the artists and teachers) about the same demographic, age-wise. And again, it's exciting, and it's sort of keeping the networks alive between education and industry. It is that important industry education link. The artists who work with me, appreciate my job a lot more and therefore appreciate the potential of young people and drama in education. And we have artists who are trained in education as well so in Queensland we have this lovely cross-over.

Su-Lin: Yes, which is important. In Singapore we don't have many artists trained in pedagogy ...

Karen: Yeah, you're developing it as you go which can still be very valid I think but there's nothing like having a pedagogy that keeps you grounded, scaffolded ...

Su-Lin: Yes, it keeps you grounded.

Karen: And you know why you're making the decisions you are. Definitely. Which is why when I was teaching in youth theatre it's the same thing, I really wanted to learn how to do it properly. And feel good about it all the time. And when you have twenty bad experiences, you say: "oh, there must be a way

to avoid that!" I should have had some kind of foresight or there must be something I can do.

It's like working with young people so ... that's the passion that drives you, you have to like them and you have to enjoy artmaking and pedagogy.

Su-Lin: Do any of the other teachers here who are not drama teachers use drama in their classroom?

Karen: Yes. There's a history teacher who uses teacher and student in role, and a couple of language teachers in the middle school who might don a costume from time to time, get to be hot-seated by the kids or ... but you're not going to walk into every classroom here and see drama in action ... they are the exception.

Su-Lin: It seems that this school has the power to attract, choose and employ really good teachers here.

Karen: Yes. The reputation of the department attracts the applicants but that depends on who makes the employment decision in the end. I have a say in who I employ but not always. So that can be dependent on the person's other subject area so we look at the broader context and that can be more influential than their drama specific training. We've seen in the past less successful placements but the core has mostly been good.

Su-Lin: I meant to ask you about teacher assessment. Is there a certain way that it's done here?

Karen: Yes, the college has an appraisal process which we have to do every 3 years. You write down a reflection from your last appraisal process and what you have planned to have accomplished, your major professional, personal goals and then you re-write that with the future goals in mind. Then there's a panel with at least one of your superiors, and two of your peers and they discuss it with you, and discuss areas you would like to develop and talk about strategies on how you might achieve those goals, and then that's signed off and you do it again every three years.

Su-Lin: Do you within the drama department watch other teachers teach?

Karen: Sometimes. I don't have to be so formal in my monitoring of the classes as there isn't that many of us teaching. So because I

collaboratively plan and moderate assessment, and I sort of invite teachers to come and watch my assessment, I get invited to watch their assessment or we assess together. And the classrooms just being where they are, I keep an eye on what's going on and parents call me if there's a problem straightaway here and that only happens very rarely and teachers have usually alerted me to the issue before.

I have had a teacher here with me for his first 3 years of teaching, and as a first year he invited me to see his work. With first years sometimes I do and sometimes I don't formally observe but I planned with him really closely in that year and was very involved in his reflection process as he went through certain experiences in that first year. I spent a lot of time on reflection and just making time to talk about happenings in the classroom and from that, the relationship develops. And from that kind of communication process know what happens because I get told. I tend to work that way so that people feel that they can come to me, that I won't judge them and that I'll be very open to their concerns. I still drop in on his classes and he has always felt that he can just drop in on mine-it is very collegial and informal.

I trust that there's more than 1 way of teaching so their style might be different to mine but I try and give them positive support for whatever particular approach they have. But there are certain ... there are certain problems that haven't come up for any of my faculty yet but if they did, I would ask and observe, I would become very active and I've been very lucky not to have to.

Su-Lin: And for your own practice, how do you reflect on that?

Karen: Being involved in the wider professional community, I can compare my own artistic work with other professional work. Being connected closely to other teachers professionally, seeing their students' work, discussing approaches to work with them, connecting with other work programs. Being on the panel, looking at work from other schools and thinking, will my work fit into that standard? Working as a pre-service educator and supervising pre-service teachers, I think that's a really good way of developing professional dialogue and I really encourage my pre-service teachers to reflect and feedback on my professional practice, and say what they like/dislike, and I'm very critical of my own practice so I'm a critical practitioner.

Like this year 11 class, I spend a lot of time thinking about what's going on, and what can I change, and how can I effect change and so I tend to open that dialogue up with my pre-service teachers. So they help me. And then of course I encourage and get students to feedback to me on my classes in the unit at the end of term, get them to write; do written feedback. Again, it's not something I do every term with every class but particularly with classes like this year 11 class. They're probably going to do a fair bit of reflection because I really want to find out what's going on.

And the kids here are very open about things. They're very nice and tell you things about your own practice in a nice way. And they know that I will listen to what they have to say. So that's another way I test my own practice by students' response and feedback.

Su-Lin: In terms of planning, do the 3 of you plan together for the year's work?

Karen: Yes. It happens on several levels. I probably do a fair bit of the early performance project planning in the year before, so clarifying and submitting what we want to do as performance projects next year, preparing budgets and getting them into calendar. This is usually in October.

In terms of curriculum planning, we just had a day as a group re-writing our work program. In terms of every grade planning, I tend to sit down the relevant teachers and say, what are your plans, how will this fit into a calendar. The school also has a whole lot of documents that you have to fill in to assist in this planning, like when are the test dates will be and so-on.... Then we talk about what we're going to do as assessment for each unit in each year level. This is when we will re-write units.

I had 2 full days with my faculty at the beginning of the year where we talked about classroom culture stuff like maintaining resources, cleaning up rubbish in classroom areas, and I tend to be rather fascist in this area but because in the other areas I'm fairly low-key, they're ok with that. Housekeeping. And I think, although you'd have to ask them really, that everyone feels they belong to a department where their work is valued, so they value their work. I get that feeling anyway, and they all have their own lives, and communities, and I'm not expecting that this department should be their total life. And I'm happy to give and take as much as people are willing to give most of the time

because that's life.

Su-Lin: You mentioned that you get feedback from the students on the units. Does that go back into the planning?

Karen: Yes, definitely. The written feedback would go back to my personal planning specifically.

When students are choosing a subject for the following year, like in year 9 and they're choosing drama in year 10, I actually asked the teachers to do formal evaluations with them in a group. We did this again this year as well. What they wrote, what they said became very relevant to our planning and classroom dialogue because we perceived a big problem with kids not picking drama in the first year 11 subject survey last year. We had had all these teachers leaving and I was wondering if that was the reason, or if there were other reasons. And then after the survey some of the kids did pick the subject up because of that evaluation process, because some of the questions were about their understanding of what year 11 is going to be like, and the conversations that came out of that probably allowed the kids to ask the questions they had about their perceptions about the arts.

So formal feedback is considered carefully, and other feedback to assist with individual development would be personal, like personal evaluations to see where they see themselves going as a group; those are the sorts of questions I ask this year 11 class.

Appendix A: 4

Interview with Ruth
Artist, Mayflower Primary School
7 September 2001

Su-Lin: How did you come into drama in education, and why?

Ruth: I started teaching speech and drama - that was the first point of contact in using drama in teaching. And to take your diploma for speech and drama, you had to be teaching for a while. That was in 1988. I worked with children in Primary 1s, then 2s and then teenagers. And I discovered that I liked it. At the same time I was doing theatre – mainly performing. But when Rani Moorthy came back with an MA in theatre philosophy in theatre in education in 1993, we embarked on our first theatre in education project. And that was because Rani was trained in it. I performed and collaborated with her on producing a Teacher's Pack, about 30 pages long which was given to each school that participated in the TIE program. So working with Rani got me thinking that it's more than just teaching, there are other possibilities. That was when I concentrated in exploring drama as a tool in itself; from 1993 onwards.

Su-Lin: How about your own background with drama? Why did you even consider taking speech and drama?

Ruth: Because of my previous experiences at my (Primary and Secondary) school, Katong Convent. I think the school was extremely progressive where the Principal at that time was very much into speech, creative writing and choral reading. The school had a great tradition in creating and performing. And every time we had a school event, Book and Music Week, National Day, an Easter Festival, any celebration, and because we are a Catholic school, we had a lot of celebrations; there was always a performance.

And we were always pulled out of class to do a rehearsal, a recital, and the performances we did were as important as academic work. It was never secondary and always part and parcel of our lives in school. On hindsight, it made me feel as if I was in a Performing Arts school. So that was when the interest developed. And the Principal came up with a lot of programs. Like Library Week where we learnt how to manage a library and repair torn books and we ended up reading some of them. She got us to write poems in response to the books we read, and then present them.

We had speech classes conducted by 2 Irish sisters. They would come

and provide reading aloud programs. I can't remember how they fixed the time-table but I remember even when there was no classroom available, we would sit in the tuckshop in a circle on the benches and do our reading aloud. That was our drama class - in the tuckshop. And we had a lot of fun. The drama was there to support the speech but sometimes it took over. And we were all willing to stay back after school for speech and drama if we had to. I learnt improvisation through these lessons at the age of 9! The sisters believed that the learning of speech came through the play-acting. And then of course, there was a lot of singing, we did musicals, and there were drama competitions. And that was the core of Katong Convent.

Su-Lin: When did your formal training in drama start?

Ruth: My training has always been with a theatre company. During my time, there was nowhere to get drama training at a tertiary level in Singapore. Until I went away to do my M.A. about two years ago. One of the courses I took was on Healing and Performance. This had an education component. And for another semester I worked with Boal. And that had to do with drama as a tool to empower the oppressed. I think the students in Singapore are the oppressed.

I think my work in Singapore is slightly different. I don't just look at DIE or TIE as just one way of approaching drama in the curriculum. I see drama in the curriculum as a tool that can be used to enhance any subject studied, like History, or Civics. And the third model I see is using drama as a skill development in itself. And in the skill development itself, the other things we want to achieve like DIE, and drama in a curriculum program can also be fostered. And the fourth is the speech and drama aspect where drama is a portion of speech.

Su-Lin: So after doing drama in education for 8 years now, what would you say is your personal philosophy towards it?

Ruth: My main philosophy would be that drama is a tool to open up certain doors within a child. That is my main aim and every time I use drama, that is what I think about. It is like a key. And I keep on using it even if you're not going to become an actor because that is not the point. Drama is not going to make you an actor but it's going to open up other doors for you in certain aspects of your personality. Something that can unlock something else.

Su-Lin: How do you view your role as a facilitator?

Ruth: It's always something to do with the arts. Even if I do drama, I will

always incorporate something else, like movement that is dance-based, music, visual art. But drama is my forte so I fall back on it. I interpret character, role, function, space, in a very dramatic way. So I still come from that as my background.

Su-Lin: And how do you view drama's role in education?

Ruth: Drama is important in schools because it develops the child beyond the IQ level. It develops their EQ in an experiential manner that is not currently available in the Singapore education system with its academic approach. Because academic learning is through rote learning, regurgitation of facts. In drama there is teamwork. And even if you choose not to participate, you are still learning from observing. And drama is physical. In academic-based subjects, you only use one frame which is the brain, the Cartesian mode. But in drama you engage your mind, emotions and your body and you need to try out your ideas, have them assessed and critiqued. And it comes straight from your gut, your instincts. I did a lot of project work when I was in school but the ones I remember the most are those that involve drama. Because drama involves physical work and certain mental processes. It is very specific. And you're responsible for other people. Even though your role might be small, you are responsible for the whole team. It is so affecting. So it's not just the mental but your whole presence is needed.

Su-Lin: Do you think it's a benefit working outside of the school system?

Ruth: There are benefits and there are disadvantages. The benefits are that we can take an objective look at how a school is being run and then offer solutions; like a management consultant. And coming from the outside, you can collaborate with a teacher because the teacher has academic strengths and knows the curriculum better, and I know my drama well, so we can work together. We both have specialized fields and so the potential for collaboration is good.

The other advantage I can think of is that you are not involved in the running of the school. And that is a heavy responsibility – the politics, the administrative difficulties. And drama, like any other subject requires a lot of planning and our education system is such that our planning suffers because of the administrative work. Being outside of the system, I can focus on planning. And you are also seen as a friend by the students and so you can reach out to the students better.

The disadvantages are that because I am not in the system, I am only able to manage consult. So some of my plans might not pull through because I am not there to see it pull through. And some of the schools

might not agree to it because they are wary of it. And if it does not pull through, it ends there and then. The second disadvantage is that because you're not there full-time, many teachers think that you don't understand the problem. And because of that, you can create suspicion and antagonism. So instead of good collaboration, you get a bad one.

Also, sometimes you treat it as a job, you come once to the school, and that's it. There is no follow-up. That's why a one year program is not beneficial. It needs to be two years and more to see the full term benefit in a school. But you are an outsider and cannot determine the policy that is going to be made within the school. You're affecting the students, but you can't affect the system so much. So you hope you meet the right Principal.

And Singapore does not have an arts education or drama education society where they can really galvanize or advocate for something. There is no advocacy work right now, as yet. But there is a lot of work to be done. There needs to be a larger umbrella to see that the work is being professionally done. All of us are free agents and could potentially do more harm than good if we don't have proper training. And the other disadvantage is that as outsiders to the school, we can never fully understand the situation in the school enough because we are not always there. At Mayflower I feel that I understand the school better now after 2 years but even then, as an outsider, there are still obstacles.

Appendix A: 5

Interview with Jessie
Drama Teacher, Merlion Secondary School
1 September 2001

Su-Lin: Why did you decide to become a teacher?

Jessie: It was more for financial reasons as with a teaching scholarship, I would be getting paid to become a teacher. In return, I would be bonded for five years. But after teaching, I realize that I am quite good at it, and enjoy it. I love the interaction with the kids.

Drama is also something that I fell into, rather than being out there looking for it. I took double majors and one of them was drama. There was an audition going on and I was deciding what to take for my major. I followed my friends for the drama audition and got in. The first two years were a bit of a mess. I love performing, I love drama but I really didn't like the environment in the school. But in my third and fourth year I had more of a fixed goal where I wanted to do my Honors. So I decided to work for it and that is when the passion really started developing. I discovered that I could excel at a subject which is very rare for me as I am not academically inclined. But through drama I realized that I can actually think! So I proceeded and got a first class Honors. And so here I am.

Su-Lin: So your introduction to drama was at the tertiary level?

Jessie: Yes. I was initially on probation at the National Institute of Education because of my lack of background in drama. But I've always had an interest in drama but never given an opportunity to pursue it. In secondary school I was a rebel and I started the detention class. I spent most of my time outside the Principal's office. Even if I wanted to join something like the English Language Drama and Debating Society, they wouldn't accept me because I was such a trouble-maker. Same thing for Junior College. They had plays and everything but I wasn't a likely candidate for a play because I didn't speak with an accent, and I wasn't pally with the whole group of theatre people.

And that's why I'm here. I'm here and not at a more elite school because the students there are already given an opportunity so much more than kids here. And over here, it's a nice environment but yet the kids are not given an opportunity. If I wasn't here, there wouldn't be a drama program. They weren't looking for a drama teacher. It's just that I wanted to try out a drama program and the Principal agreed. And I think the kids are getting a lot out of the program. I'm certain they are.

Su-Lin: What is your philosophy towards teaching?

Jessie: This is from my valedictorian speech. To reach out to the last kid in the row who is straying the furthest away from education because he/she does not know what education means. Reaching out to that last kid. To make the last kid sit in front, because he or she is now interested. So to get kids interested in learning, to get them excited about learning. There's a lot more to educating. Education is about empowerment and not about regurgitation which is what a lot of kids think it is. And to bring the message across that there can be joy and fun in learning. I never experienced joy and fun in learning at all till the last years of my University education.

Su-Lin: So what do you think is your role as a teacher?

Jessie: I inspire more than nurture. I cannot be a nurturer because I teach over 200 kids a week and I only see them for such a short period of time. I am a nurturer for the kids I see in my own form class but I don't think that is my primary role. I see myself an as inspirer. The person who opens doors so that kids can get an understanding of the world and themselves. The person who is giving them the key and empowering them. Occasionally I'm like a farmer who plants the seed and waters them and puts fertilizers but that's only limited to a small bunch of people like my senior students who are leaving. It takes a lot out of me. But more often than not, I see myself as an evangelical, inspirational person. The one who plants the seeds, but not necessarily the one who watches them grow, or puts the fertilizer and watches them grow. I want to see myself as a person who helps build bridges, the one who can heal in a sense. Heal misconceptions, problems, relationships.

Su-Lin: What do you think is drama's role in education?

Jessie: I'm speaking from experience. Drama's role in my life was one of empowerment. It allowed me to see that there is a world beyond myself, and it gave me an opportunity to participate in this world. It is the empowerment of a voice, of my voice. Knowing that I can have an opinion, and my opinion may be wrong or right and most of the time it's a grey area but I can speak, and I can have something to say. And this led to, therefore, I will express myself; therefore, I will not be inhibited; therefore, I can feel more confident because I know where I am and I know where I stand, and I can face a whole group of people who are intimidating and yet I know I can be strong because I have an opinion, I have a thought and I know I can contribute. Whether you can accept it or not, I can still contribute. This is empowerment. And drama did that for me.

So what is drama's role in education? The voice. To give students the voice. I believe in all the personal development arguments like giving confidence, expression etc. but all this means nothing if you don't know your worth. It will be an empty vessel if there's nothing inside. Having that something inside which needs to be released will motivate the rest of things to happen. And you will no longer be an empty vessel inside.

Su-Lin: What is it about drama that allows this to happen? Can you pinpoint it?

Jessie: Reflection in a mirror. Through drama process you get a clearer picture hopefully of yourself. It is a reflection of the world as well. A reflection is a separate reality. It's not your own reality. In that sense you get a detached view on things. With detachment, you're better able to get a macro view of yourself, your friends, issues, concerns ... you get a better sense of things. Drama provides that. And that's on one level.

On the other level, drama lets you step inside. It draws you in to create your own world, and the real world as well. It draws you into a world where you are experimenting with your imagination; things you wouldn't think of or say sometimes; things that are taboo. You are allowed to experiment it in a safe and secure space. It is the idealistic world I suppose, hopefully. Where everybody works as a team, where everybody plays games and enjoys themselves. It is this idealistic world that builds trust. And with trust, you are able to develop a better relationship with each other. To go beyond the superficial level and move on to a more meaningful level. So drama draws you in on one hand, and gives you enough tools for reflection so that you are better able to make sense of what is going on.

Su-Lin: Are you familiar with the term aesthetic education?

Jessie: Yes. Peter Abbs and the 4 levels – Forming, Making, Presenting, Responding. Forming is the place where students gather to brainstorm ideas, get a hold of what they want to talk about and develop and explore. Making is when they work together as a team. Each one contributes a bit and that's where the learning through drama perhaps comes in. The idea of give and take. The idea of how to operate as human beings in a society comes in. Presenting. Presenting to an audience, presenting to ... and again, presenting involves heaps and heaps of teamwork and presenting incorporates the aspect of learning about drama. Learning the language of drama, learning the different styles; lighting, sound, character, plot, theme; the different aspects of the theory of drama; what makes drama.

And then the reflection bit. I think that's the most important aspect because every experience is only an experience unless you have reflected on it. I find it a very difficult step to take in my lessons because we try to see the tangible, we try to grasp the tangible, and reflection exists in the intangible. And so you want to say things about the experience but in a structure, sometimes I overlook the reflection because you think these kids have gotten a lot and you might overlook it. And I have a tendency to do that. So it's something that I'm trying to implement. I believe in it.

Su-Lin: Do you believe that an aesthetic education is one about the senses as well?

Jessie: Yes. A thought that you have cannot just be a cognitive thought. It will lean on your views about life. And your views about life will definitely be developed from your experiences with life. And your experiences with life come from the heart, and not the mind.

Su-Lin: I feel that education here emphasizes the cognitive and neglects feelings and emotions. To the extent that students don't know how to express what they feel. Do you agree?

Jessie: I have two views on this. I agree with you that Singapore education downplays a lot on emotions because everything has to be logical, everything has to be argued, everything has to have a structure. Therefore, where are emotions? You cannot place emotions in a jar. How can you contain emotions. So yes, I do agree with that.

Do my students feel? I think it's back to that opinion matter. It's all related. Opinion is not from the mind. Opinion is from the heart as well. Like I said, you cannot develop a thought unless you have experience. So it's all related. What the students lack is the courage to say I feel something because they've never been allowed to feel. They are not trained in expressing their feelings and emotions. Perhaps that is the first step. Perhaps the first step is to draw all the feelings and emotions out of you.

But I believe there is a second step. The kids I am teaching are undergoing puberty. They feel a lot and I'm not trying to downplay their feelings, but most of the time, they are over-generalized. There is a need to structure these feelings and thoughts and channel them somewhere. And say, "ok, this is the limit, don't go over there, let's think rational thoughts here". So it requires a balance to draw it out, and then sieving it and channeling it. It can be detrimental to the kid if you get all these feelings out and then there's nowhere to go. They only get frustrated, they only get more confused. So that's where the reflection part comes in as well.

Su-Lin: What is your role in this school?

Jessie: I'm a drama teacher in the school. I also teach English but Drama is my main subject. I teach it during curriculum time. I also handle the Drama Co-Curricular Activity. I started up the Drama Club where I select scripts, conduct workshops, coach, etc. And I am also responsible for developing drama within the school, and cluster. So this means I organize events like camps, brainstorm for ways to incorporate drama into the curriculum, I come up with new ways of using drama as a tool. This is so that the whole school will get to experience drama, and not only through lessons, but also incorporated into other activities. And then there are the other ad-hoc school activities and events which I contribute to.

Su-Lin: How long have you been teaching for?

Jessie: Slightly more than one and a half years.

Su-Lin: And you teach lower secondary students?

Jessie: Yes. The secondary ones and twos. I take the secondary twos in semester 1 and secondary ones in semester two. This is to allow for continuity from sec 1 to 2. So each group of twenty students only take drama for a term.

Su-Lin: How many teaching hours do you have?

Jessie: Something like 20 hours which is a lot. My other friends are getting 18 – 19 hours. And they don't even need to coach a CCA group. Besides I'm involved in some planning in the school because Drama is being developed as a niche area at Merlion. I think the school seems to have this idea that since I take 20 students in the class, my workload is lighter.

Su-Lin: They have misconceptions about drama. Which leads me to my next question. How much support would you say you have for drama in this school?

Jessie: My Principal does not stop me from doing anything I want. I suppose that is support since there's nothing blocking me from doing things. But the support that I would like is the moral support. I mean I'm doing the work and I'm fine with that but it would be nice if I could get a pat on the shoulder and be appreciated. So I acknowledge that I get support in the freedom to do the things I want but what I would really prefer is to be appreciated for what I am doing. Perhaps this appreciation comes from the freedom I get to do whatever..

Su-Lin: How do you plan the syllabus?

Jessie: I have a huge variety of activities because every group is different. Even within the same level of students, what might work for an Express class might not work for a Normal Technical class. I plan according to what I've learnt from teaching the previous batch of students. Like I found that process drama doesn't work with the sec 1s because they couldn't buy into the make-believe world. Or rather they were not enjoying the subject enough to put themselves inside the make-believe world because they don't want to look stupid. Then I tried looking at scripts. Taking a more traditional approach where we looked at characters, elements of drama, etc. Again, that seemed fine but there wasn't much enjoyment. One term of about 10 weeks is very short and by the time they went anywhere with it, the term was already over. So it was a bummer.

This year I tried theatre sports and it works very well. It is in the nature of our students to be very competitive and if this element is present, then the students move from the "I want to beat you" point of view. Here's the catch, when they find the subject more interesting they then want to develop it more. So that's the method I use. And without the students' interest, you can't do something if they find it long-drawn. And drama can be long-drawn; there are different characters and you are required to suspend your belief and so unless the students are interested, they are not going to buy into it. So that wasn't very good. With theatre sports, the students are interested, it's short-paced, it's funny, people get to act for 2 – 3 minutes, it's also competitive which is something they like. So hopefully they get a feel for it and they enjoy it. And when they come back in Sec. 2, they're more willing to buy into the make-believe.

I still believe in process drama but I think a lot of preparation work needs to be in place before it can take effect. Preparation work that needs to take into consideration the teaching space, culture, and the issue that we're going to deal with. When I was taking process drama with my sec. 2s last semester, we were dealing with the issue of parent and child relationships. Other issues could be on love, friendship; things that interest the students.

Su-Lin: So you plan and implement your lesson plans. Do you need to submit a copy of your plans to the school?

Jessie: No. I used to be very detailed in my lesson plans but I no longer do that. Maybe I'm jaded. I know what I'm going to do for the entire term but I found that it changes with the student cohort, and so I adapt. I found that I planned a whole term's work but I had to throw so much of it away because it didn't seem suitable at certain

points, or there were better approaches for different classes, etc. So right now I have a brief plan and I adapt and am a lot more flexible.

Su-Lin: You mentioned just now that most of the support you get is in terms of infrastructure. Do you wish you had more time to do drama?

Jessie: Yes. It is too short. We need to re-look at the curriculum, to re-look at the amount of time allocated to drama. It will affect the sec 1s and sec 2s, and English as well because I teach both. I am trying to get my friend who is drama trained as well into the school and if that is successful, I need to plan what she is going to do. So I would like to re-look at things.

I take 9 classes of drama per week and I am trying to build rapport with the kids. I know I can but I need more time and more concentrated work. It can't be just touch and go. And it's kind of a waste because we have something good going and I'm trying to be a nurturer but perhaps I've never seen that as my role because I've never been given an opportunity.

Su-Lin: Do you manage to reflect on your own teaching, and how do you do it?

Jessie: It used to be more precise and concise when I had detailed lesson plans. I would reflect every time after a lesson, and type it in, and make judgments about what to do. But now without the time to think and with me running around all the time, it's difficult. And I'm not willing to sacrifice my personal time. I'm not. I think my reflection has diminished. The reflection that I do is more for next year. It's incorporated more into the planning than a separate time for reflection. And it's a bit difficult when I don't have someone to bounce off ideas with. It's difficult for other teachers to understand even though I'm speaking English. It's like a different language. And I don't blame them because they are not in this field.

Su-Lin: Do you know if other teachers in this school use drama in the classroom?

Jessie: Not that I know of. The other teachers don't approach me about drama. I'm not sure whether it's a rank thing where they are all more senior than I am. And I don't feel comfortable stepping over my area and telling them what to do. I did use to give them lesson plans, like this is good for voice etc. but I never asked them how it went because I assumed that if they did try it out, they would let me know. These are English teachers who are willing to try. But I

feel that I am in an awkward position. Sometimes I overhear conversations of other teachers using drama but they never come to me directly to talk about it. I think maybe it's because they experienced failure in the classroom. But what they may not understand is that you need to do warm-ups, and you need a conducive environment for drama. And maybe the teachers don't want to come to me because it seems that on the surface it is working for my lesson. These are the vibes that I am getting but I don't want to talk about it with them and get involved in the politics of things.

Su-Lin: Do you get the support of the parents for drama?

Jessie: I think now that drama is acknowledged as a niche in the school, it is easier to work with the parents. Before this they were also quite supportive because the government is going on about creativity. I haven't received any complaints.

Su-Lin: What does it mean when you say drama is a niche?

Jessie: As far as the school is concerned, it means that you get more money for a particular area so that you can develop it. Because you have earned a certain status for it.

Su-Lin: Have you been asked to do drama presentations for the school?

Jessie: Yes. We have performed at assembly before. And when I was doing my attachment to this school, I organized a lunch-time performance in the studio which was open to other students to come and watch, and the room was packed with an audience. So I think the school prefers bigger performances but I would rather perform in a smaller, intimate space where the actors, props and performance would be honored for what it is rather than be faced with the school hall where you have to worry with the technicalities. Performances that are works-in-progress, and where the audience can give feedback as well. Unfortunately, I'm very reluctant to suggest events like that now lest I get more work to do.

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Appendix B: 1

THE FIVE KEY IDEAS BEHIND SINGAPORE 21

1. **Every Singaporean Matters**

   - The idea that every Singaporean is important and has a contribution to make.

2. **Opportunities For All**

   - This idea is related to the first and is an assurance that every Singaporean will be catered for.

3. **Strong Families: Our Foundation and Our Future**

   - The idea that strong families are key to meeting the needs of Singaporeans and must remain the source for giving and receiving care and support.

4. **The Singapore Heartbeat**

   - The idea of fostering an emotional rootedness to Singapore through a shared sense of belonging, a collective memory of a shared past, and total commitment to a shared future.

5. **Active Citizens: Making A Difference to Society**

   - The idea that every Singaporean has an obligation to society and the country that nurtures them, and therefore should play their part.

Appendix B: 2

THE DESIRED OUTCOMES OF EDUCATION

Intermediate Outcomes of Education

The following outcomes outline what students should achieve at each stage of schooling. Each stage builds upon what has been achieved before, and lays the foundation for the continuation of a strand to the next level. The resultant outcomes of education can be found on the following page.

PRIMARY	SECONDARY	JUNIOR COLLEGE
At the end of Primary School, pupils should:	At the end of Secondary School, students should:	At the end of Junior College, students should:
• be able to distinguish right from wrong	• have moral integrity	• be resilient and resolute
• have learnt to share and put others first	• have care and concern for others	• have a sound sense of social responsibility
• be able to build friendships with others	• be able to work in teams and value every contribution	• understanding what it takes to inspire and motivate others
• have a lively curiosity about things	• be enterprising and innovative	• have an entrepreneurial and creative spirit
• be able to think for and express themselves	• possess a broad-based foundation for further education	• be able to think independently and creatively
• take pride in their work	• believe in their ability	• strive for excellence
• have cultivated healthy habits	• have an appreciation for aesthetics	• have a zest for life
• love Singapore	• know and believe in Singapore	• understand what it takes to lead Singapore

ALL POST-SECONDARY AND TERTIARY STUDENTS	POTENTIAL LEADERS
Students should:	Potential Leaders should:
• be morally upright, be culturally rooted yet understanding and respecting differences, be responsible to family, community and country	• be committed to improving society
• believe in our principles of multi-racialism and meritocracy, appreciate the national constraints but see the opportunities	• be proactive in surmounting our constraints
• be constituents of a gracious society	• have compassion towards others
• be willing to strive, take pride in work, value working with others	• be able to inspire, motivate and draw out the best from others
• be able to think, reason and deal confidently with the future, have courage and conviction in facing adversity	• be able to chart our destiny and lead
• be able to seek, process and apply knowledge	• be able to forge breakthroughs in a knowledge-based economy
• be innovative – have a spirit of continual improvement, a lifelong habit of learning and an enterprising spirit in undertakings	• be creative and imaginative
• think global, but be rooted to Singapore	• have the tenacity to fight against the odds and not quit

Appendix B: 3

THE 8 INTELLIGENCES

1. **Linguistic**
   - consists of the ability to think in words and to use language to express and appreciate complex meanings.

2. **Logical-mathematical**
   - makes it possible to calculate, quantify, consider propositions and hypotheses, and carry out complex mathematical operations.

3. **Spatial**
   - instills the capacity to think in three-dimensional ways as do sailors, pilots, sculptors, painters and architects. It enables one to perceive external and internal imagery, to recreate, transform, or modify images, to navigate oneself and objects through space, and to produce or decode graphic information

4. **Musical**
   - is evident in individuals who possess a sensitivity to pitch, melody, rhythm, and tone. Those demonstrating this intelligence include musicians, composers, conductors, critics, instrument makers, as well as sensitive listeners

5. **Bodily-kinaesthetic**
   - enables one to manipulate objects and fine-tune physical skills

6. **Interpersonal**
   - the capacity to understand and interact effectively with others

7. **Intrapersonal**
   - the ability to construct an accurate perception of oneself and to use such knowledge in planning and directing one's life

8. **Naturalist**
   - consists of observing patterns in nature, identifying and classifying objects, and understanding natural and human-made systems.

Appendix B: 4

BROAD RESEARCH QUESTIONS FOR THE FIVE DIMENSIONS

The Intentional Dimension

- Focuses on the goals or aims formulated for the school or classroom

1. What is the aim of education in this setting?
2. What is the aim of drama education in this setting?
3. How are these aims set?
4. Is there a 'hidden curriculum' in this setting?

The Structural Dimension

- Focuses on the formal structures within a school setting

1. What are the necessary resources to enable drama in education to take place in this setting?
2. Are they being provided?

The Curricular Dimension

- Focuses on the content, activities and goals of the curriculum

1. What does the drama curriculum look like?
2. How was the curriculum planned?
3. How is the drama curriculum being carried out in schools?
4. Are there any other activities or programs in the school that complement the drama curriculum?

The Pedagogical Dimension

- Focuses on teachers and their practice

1. What are the teacher's attitudes to drama education in this setting?
2. How does the teacher conduct the drama lesson?
3. What is the teacher's relationship with the students like?
4. Does the teacher form partnerships with other teachers or drama practitioners in teaching drama?
5. How often, and where does a teacher go to get further training?

The Evaluative Dimension

- Focuses on assessment practices in schools

1. What are the aims of assessment in this setting?
2. How are these aims set?
3. How important is assessment in this school?
4. How is drama assessed in this school?
5. How are teachers assessed in this school?

Appendix B: 5

MATRIX OF RESEARCH SETTINGS AND RESEARCH AREAS

The matrix is represented over two pages:

Field Settings/ The 5 Dimensions	**In Queensland**				**In Singapore**	
	Observing drama classes in primary schools		Observing drama classes in high schools		Observing drama classes in schools that have drama in the curriculum	
	A pilot school for the new drama syllabus	A school not using the new drama syllabus *(suitable research setting not available)*	A public school	A private school	A primary school	A secondary school
The Intentional Dimension						
The Structural Dimension						
The Curricular Dimension						
The Pedagogical Dimension						
The Evaluative Dimension						

Field Settings/ The 5 Dimensions	**In Queensland and Singapore**	
	Interviewing the teachers/artists of the classes observed	Interviewing key players in drama education
The Intentional Dimension		
The Structural Dimension		
The Curricular Dimension		
The Pedagogical Dimension		
The Evaluative Dimension		

Appendix B: 6

LIST OF RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS IN BRISBANE
(in no particular order)

1. **Jenny**, Specialist Drama Teacher, Blessed Heart College

2. **Donna**, Head of Department, Performing Arts, Springvale State High School

3. **Karen**, Head of Department, Performing Arts, All Saints College

4. **Dr. Brad Haseman**, Coordinator, Postgraduate Education and Research Training, Creative Industries Research and Applications Center, Queensland University of Technology

5. **Dr. John O'Toole**, Associate Professor in Drama, Faculty of Education, Griffith University

6. **Madonna Stinson**, Project Officer (The Arts), Queensland School Curriculum Council

7. **Adrienne Jones**, Head of Review Panel (Drama), Board of Senior Secondary School Studies, and Education Liaison Officer (Secondary), Queensland Arts Council

8. **Susan Richer**, Program Director, Out of The Box Festival, and Associate Producer, Stage X Festival

9. **Mitchell Holmes**, Education Liaison Officer, Queensland Theatre Company

10. **Sean Mee**, Artistic Director, La Boite Theatre

Appendix B:7

2010 QUEENSLAND STATE EDUCATION

2010 is a report released by the State of Queensland (Department of Education). It outlines the government's vision for education in this decade and provides policy for all state run, and funded schools in the state. It is a recognition by the Queensland government of the 'forces of change' that are taking place in economies and societies globally. The policy aims to prepare young Queenslanders for the new economy; recognizing that education is a crucial place to start:

> If we in Queensland want access to the benefits of the knowledge economy of the future, we have to ensure the education levels and skills of our people are up with the best in the world. Students who complete year 12 or its equivalent have better life chances. Increasing the number of our young people who achieves this gives them a "fair go" at life's opportunities and will improve our economic performance. It is the basis of a Smart state.
>
> (Education Queensland, 2000: 3)

Being a Smart state in Queensland means becoming 'a learning society'. This society requires people who are 'adaptable' and its key resources will be 'human and social capital' and not just physical and material resources (ibid: 8).

2010 takes into account the shifts in education that have arisen from a combination of economic factors as well as developments in societies. It realizes the importance of making links with community and partnerships, stating that it is the responsibility of everyone – students, teachers, parents, businesses and the community – to make the vision possible (ibid: 3). The document also calls attention to the shrinking world made smaller through developments in technology, and the increase of information that is now widely available. This throws up questions on learning – what to learn, and how to learn.

These 'forces of change' are summarized into five categories under the heading of, 'learning to live with complexity, uncertainty and diversity', thereby reinforcing the need for 'adaptable' people (ibid: 4 – 8). They are:

- **Changes to families**

This takes into account the change in demographics in family structures and the eroding of family values. The effects of which are being reported by schools where teachers observe 'anxiety, depression, lack of discipline, aggression ... and a greater need for adult role models .....' in their students. This places new pressures on schools to provide students with 'high levels of social support' and creates the need for 'parenting education'.

- **A cultural melting pot**

2010 acknowledges that Australia is a multicultural society and the formation of its identity will involve knowing and understanding its people's diverse histories and cultures.

- **Economic change**

This point highlights the changes that are taking place in society whereby jobs are shifting to 'communication, service and knowledge-based industries'. This will place an emphasis on 'the individual's interpersonal skills' when seeking employment.

- **Information technology**

The importance and necessity of information technology is made clear in *2010* in order to be a Smart state. It states that 'learning will be transformed' because of it and that teachers will need to harness information technology to 'manage the learning of their students'. They will also need to help their students be critical of the increased load of information they will be receiving.

- **Workforce skills and competitiveness**

This goes to the heart of the *2010* policy whereby increasing the number of students that complete Year 12 in schools is a top priority. This increases their chances of gaining enough knowledge and skills for the economy. It also means strengthening the co-ordination of school and post-school programs.

The impact of this on schools for the next decade would be creating 'safe, tolerant and disciplined environments' where young people prepare to be 'active and reflective' citizens with 'a disposition to lifelong learning'. Consequently, these Australians will be able to contribute to the wider society as well as globally.

Appendix B: 8

AIMS OF SCHOOLS OBSERVED IN BRISBANE

A. Blessed Heart College

Mission Statement:

Blessed Heart College is a faith community made up of parents, staff, and students, striving to be "of on heart and mind on the way to God".

The College seeks to develop practical living skills in each student and to promote eager use of the intellect. Blessed Heart College encourages **the development of individual strengths**. It seeks to make school learning relevant to the wider society and to prepare students for their future, whether in the fields of higher education, employment or leisure.

Educational Aims and Practices:

Personal growth of each student is the starting point of Blessed Heart's education. The College is concerned with **affective, intellectual, social, cultural, religious and physical development**. It **does not attempt to conform students** to the established order of society, but seeks to develop the person from within to become a fully integrated human being. It seeks to stir in its students the ambition to contribute to the redevelopment and renewal of society. Above all it desires to instill the attitude of community responsibility and service.

B. Springvale State High School

School Motto:

The Pursuit of Excellence Through Learning

Educational Aims and Practices:

This focus on excellence is practiced throughout our curriculum and extra-curricular activities, with emphasis on **developing individual students to their fullest potential**. The school aims to develop confident, self-directed knowledgeable people **who think creatively and critically** and are equipped to participate in society's decision making process. Students on exit should be morally and socially responsible, employable and capable of enjoying life and prepared for further learning, and future employment.

C. All Saints College

School Motto:

Striving for excellence in Christian coeducation

At All Saints we recognize that **each student has God-given talents and abilities**, and that a successful education is not measured in grades alone, but in **the realization of one's true potential**.

Educational Aims and Practices:

All Saints' students experience an education program characterized by a strong commitment to the Christian faith, firm but caring discipline, and the expectation that they will achieve the highest standards of which they are capable. They leave All Saints with an optimistic attitude to life, **enquiring minds**, and the skills to make the most of the opportunities they are given. The programs and facilities ensure that students have **a solid grounding in traditional academic studies, are confident in using today's technology, appreciate their cultural heritage, and enjoy sporting and recreational activities**.

At All Saints, discussion and debate which often lead to important changes, are encouraged within the student body and between students and staff. We **discourage unthinking conformity in students and we encourage the development of each as a unique individual**.

Appendix B: 9

A BRIEF HISTORY OF DRAMA IN EDUCATION IN QUEENSLAND

Queensland has a tradition of speech and drama being offered mostly in private schools since the early 20th century. These programs were very strong and consisted mainly of poetry recitation and performance, dramatic monologues, prose extracts, etc. Speech and drama was very popular by the early 1970s. Simultaneously, there was an increase in interest in child-drama, with the ideas of Peter Slade and Brian Way gaining prominence. As a result, group creative drama was introduced, and drama was considered for personal development purposes. As well, some Queensland practitioners had worked with Slade and Way in the UK and brought their methodologies back to Queensland.

The fundamental incident that paved the way for drama to be introduced into the curriculum was when control over the senior school curriculum at tertiary entrance went to schools-based assessment in 1970. Teachers for the first time became the 'creators' and assessors of students' work. Prior to this all assessment had been conducted by state based exams with centralized marking. This led to the formation of the Board of Senior Secondary School Studies (B.S.S.S.S) whose role was to prepare and diversify the curriculum. As a result, the first-ever *Speech and Drama Syllabus* was prepared and accepted into Queensland schools in the mid-seventies. It had three strands: communication; oral interpretation of literature; and creative drama.

Concurrently, a group of teachers familiar with producing school musicals proposed a subject called Musical Theatre. They developed a theatre syllabus and by 1978, there were two different syllabuses operating in Queensland – *Speech and Drama*, and *Theatre*. These two syllabuses were practiced for a period of time until the B.S.S.S.S combined both to form the *Senior Drama Syllabus*, published in 1993.

The drama syllabus has since been successfully implemented, serviced, evaluated and recently re-written for secondary schools. The Liaison Officer for Drama at the B.S.S.S.S., Yvonne Hucks, stated that drama is offered in 303 senior schools, and taken by 13, 120 students in Queensland (telephone conversion, 13 November 2001). As well, the new *The Arts Years 1 – 10 Syllabus* which contains a drama strand will be implemented in late 2001.

Appendix B: 10

THE *DEVELOPMENT THROUGH DRAMA* PROGRAM

The Necessary Stage (TNS) believes in the powerful role drama plays in education. It encompasses learning both cognitively and affectively. This is salient especially when learning in the affective mode is largely missing from the Singapore education system. As expressed in the literature review, drama empowers young people to be able to express themselves. It also contributes towards their personal development, enabling them to be confident individuals equipped with necessary life-skills. Alvin Tan, the founder and Artistic Director of TNS on the first drama in education program in 1999, states:

> The Branch believes that it is important for young people to develop aesthetic appreciation at an early age. A firm foundation of arts experience needs to be provided to enable the nurturing of creative potential, particularly as the arts are a necessary counterpoint to the rational and pragmatic 'Singaporean psyche'. Young people, in touch with their emotions, can empathize and express themselves more confidently through drama, creating a more socially conscious adult. The arts provides a space for them to process their own identities and relationships to their family, friends, country and the world.
>
> (The Necessary Stage. 2000: 11)

These were some of the arguments used to justify having drama in the school curriculum – aesthetic education, creativity and personal development. TNS also drew on state education policy to bolster these arguments, discussed earlier in the Literature Review. In brief, The Ministry of Education's vision for education, **Thinking Schools, Learning Nation** called for an ability-driven, student-centered education where students' individual abilities and talents need to be identified, nurtured and harnessed (Ministry of Education, 2000: 10). It identified a core set of skills and values such as thinking skills and creativity, which students need to master (ibid: 16). The vision also states that education in Singapore is interested in providing a holistic education for students, where education meant 'developing the child morally, intellectually, physically, socially and aesthetically' (MOE, 2000, http://www1.moe.edu.sg/desired.htm).

The resulting drama in education program, *Development Through Drama*, took into account the various components in providing a holistic education to students, but focused its aims more on the social dimension. The aims and desired outcomes of the program were focused more on students' personal development in the form of developing life-skills. This was more popular with schools who were more concerned with developing their students socially than aesthetically. Therefore, drama was used as a tool for personal development, whereby learning took place *through* drama rather than *in* drama.

The aims of the program were:

- To increase students' confidence
- To teacher and develop students' social interaction skills
- To teach and develop students' communication and expression skills
- To teach and develop students' thinking skills and creativity

By the end of the program, students would have:

- Cultivated an appreciation for drama
- Developed fundamental relational and transactional skills which are important aspects of social interaction
- Developed confidence and creativity in expressing themselves using their bodies and imagination
- Identified, developed and appreciated their different faculties and talents
- Developed confidence in taking risks and appreciated the process by experimenting in a 'safe' context
- Developed team spirit through group work and understood basic relationships between the individual and the community
- Developed self-discipline and endurance
- Practiced turn-taking and giving feedback to others
- Developed their cognitive, affective and psychomotor skills

The Necessary Stage also reinforced the beliefs schools held of the contribution drama would make to the development of English language skills in students. Specifically, drama supported the English language syllabus' philosophy where 'language is a system for meaning making', 'a means of communication and expression', and 'is determined by purpose, audience, context and culture' (Ministry of Education, 2001: 3). This was an important dimension to most schools, especially public schools as a large cohort of their students came from non-English speaking homes. Therefore, even though improving students' standard of English was never an aim of the program, it was understood that it could contribute effectively toward the learning of the language. As a result, schools often used English periods to justify drama's place in the curriculum.

Development Through Drama has been conducted in two primary, and three secondary schools. It is a thirty-hour program at the primary level, and eighteen-hour program at the secondary level, over the course of a year. The duration of the program is determined by the amount of time schools are willing to create in the curriculum for

drama. Programs mostly last only a year, with no opportunity for continuation. They are conducted by freelance artists hired on a project basis.

Appendix B: 11

CRITERIA FOR ASSESSMENT FOR DEVELOPMENT THROUGH DRAMA

Primary School – Mayflower Primary School

- **Communication**
  (allows for verbal, non-verbal, language use/development, actor-audience relationships etc.)

- **Cooperation** (or contribution)
  (team work, attitude, respecting others, caring, sharing, relationship with teacher)

- **Creation**
  (evaluate students' commitment to creating, both in individual and team creation, including both ideas shared/suggested and practical implementation and development, expression, characterization, roleplay, risk-taking, spontaneity, creative thinking and imagination etc. A broad category for students 'dramatic' engagement or 'creative' involvement and 'output' etc.)

Secondary School – Orchid Secondary School

- Assessment for *Development Through Drama* formed 50% of one out of two assessments for English

- **Work-sharing Day/Presentations** (10%)

- Group Organization	10 marks (group mark)
- Idea behind the Presentation	5 marks (group mark)
- Voice Projection/Diction	5 marks (individual mark)
- Acting	10 marks (individual mark)
- Confidence	10 marks (individual mark)

- **Process** (40%)

- Teamwork (interaction skills)	10 marks
- Confidence (expression of ideas)	15 marks
- Creativity (no. of ideas, initiative, problem-solving)	10 marks
- Discipline (attendance, attire, punctuality)	5 marks

Appendix B: 12

Log No. 7 - 13 May 2001
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	1	I went to Blessed Heart College last Thurs. 10 May at
	2	8.30 am. I was to interview Jenny first, and then observe
	3	a Year 6 drama class she was teaching at 9.30 am.
	4	
Jenny gave me	5	Blessed Heart is a Catholic school that has both primary
material on the school	6	and high school. It starts from year 5 though. I was
to read - prospectus,	7	not sure where the entrance to the Main Office was
subject guide, etc.	8	and after walking round a bit, I decided to ask a
	9	group of boys where it was. The school is an all
	10	boys school and I noticed students hanging around
	11	for classes, playing with each other, talking, etc.
	12	The Main Office turned out to be pretty obvious and
	13	had a reception area for guests to wait. The lady
	14	at the front desk knew I was coming and proceeded
	15	to inform Jenny I was here. While waiting, I looked
	16	around and saw pictures of the school on the wall -
	17	photos of the old building. There was also a side
	18	table where the waiting area was which had the
	19	school newsletter, yearbooks, and other material
	20	like a Powerhouse booklet and such.
	21	
	22	Jenny then came to the Main Office to meet me
	23	and we took a walk to the staff room. She gave me
	24	a brief history/tour of the school as we were on our
	25	way and I found out that the school used to be an
	26	old farmhouse that was bought over. The school is
	27	pretty old but beautiful in that it has a very homey
	28	feel to it, like All Saints College. Lots of brick and
	29	glass, and land and greenery. The school is made
	30	up of different buildings and the primary and sec.
	31	are separated. The Principal, etc. occupy a wing of
	32	their own in the centre of the school as it seemed.
	33	
	34	The staff room was pretty small but it turned out to
	35	be more of a pantry and meeting area verses stations
	36	for the teachers and I'm sure they sat somewhere
	37	else to do marking and stuff. We then walked to the
	38	primary library where Jenny thought we could do the
	39	interview quietly. Thus I got a chance to see the
	40	library. It was average in size and again cosy looking,
	41	carpeted, with tables, chairs, shelves of books of
	42	course and a few computer terminals clustered
	43	together. We found out that we couldn't do the
	44	interview in there either because a class was coming
	45	in. So back to the staff room we went and settled

	1	on the couch to talk.
	2	
	3	Note: the 2nd half of the interview with Jenny after
	4	the drama class was conducted in the Music Room
	5	instead because it was tea break time and the staff
	6	room would have been too noisy.
	7	
	8	I felt throughout my visit there that the staff were very
	9	warm and welcoming. Jenny introduced me along
	10	the way to people we met and they were all very nice.
	11	The students didn't make much of an impression on
	12	me. Just regular students in uniforms.
	13	
Because a specialist teacher,	14	I found out during the interview that Jenny is a part-
she is sort of in-between?	15	time teacher for drama, or a drama specialist and
	16	teaches there 3 times a week. She rotates between
	17	classes and has 3 areas where she conducts her
	18	classes - the art room, music room and a miscallaneous
	19	room. Space here in the school is a problem and
	20	there is a lack of it. Jenny says there has been a
	21	lack for some time already. She mentions that she
	22	does not have a place to sit and so is like a nomad
	23	and often does her work in the library too. In fact,
	24	while we are at the library, she collects her things
	25	from the office there which she brings to class with
	26	her. She also has a bunch of keys to the rooms she
	27	teaches in and so walks around with them and with
	28	her tray of teaching materials.
	29	
Jenny is like a consultant.	30	An interesting incident happened while I was visiting.
	31	While we were walking to observe the drama class
	32	and waiting outside the art room for the students to
	33	clear out from the previous class, another teacher
	34	of the school approaches Jenny to talk to her. This
	35	teacher's daughter attends a public school which
Drama exposure is uneven in	36	does not have drama but she is interested in it. She
primary schools.	37	has asked her mum to ask Jenny for some scripts
	38	about 'the future' which she can use in her school.
	39	Jenny looks amused and it does strike home the
	40	fact that not all schools in Qld have drama, esp. at
	41	the primary level and that Blessed Heart is special to
	42	have employed a drama specialist.
	43	
	44	Another incident I notice is that a boy seems to be
	45	loitering around the walkway to speak to Jenny
	46	after class and when he gets Jenny's attention,
	47	they exchange short exchanges about something
	48	I don't quite understand but obviously it's something

	1	they do. The exchange is happy and knowing, like
	2	a previous agreement between the both of them. I
	3	guess I can say that Jenny seems to have good
	4	rapport with the teachers and students of the school
	5	so far as I had observed.
	6	
	7	The Drama Lesson (45 min.)
Most of the boys in the	8	The class I was observing was 6 Green. It was a
school are Italian and	9	class of 29 boys and 11 year olds. I later found out
Anglo-Saxon, with	10	that this was the best Year 6 class and although
some Asian students.	11	there was uneven potential in the group, that most of
	12	the boys were enthusiastic and willing to give any-
	13	thing a go. This is what Jenny says about them.
	14	She mentions that the boys in the other 2 classes
	15	are a bit slower and need a lot more effort in teaching
	16	and getting up to do drama.
	17	
	18	Jenny gets the boys to line up outside the classroom
	19	in twos and after they had settled in line, gave them
	20	brief instructions to go in quietly and to form a circle
	21	and sit down. All this I hear from inside the classroom
	22	where I am sitting in a corner on a stool. As men-
	23	tioned earlier, this class is conducted in the art room
The tables and chairs	24	where there is an art lesson before. The class before
are not put back in	25	has had to stack the tables and chairs to the back
their positions after	26	of the classroom for the drama lesson. The size of
the drama class.	27	the room is about 9 x 5 m and has shelves to one
	28	side of the room. There are students' clay works
	29	from the class before drying on the shelves and they
	30	are very cute animals. There are sinks to the front
	31	of the class, art materials on the other side of the
	32	class, a notice board at the back of the classroom.
	33	There are 2 separate entrances to the room; one at
	34	the front and one at the back. The room is airy and
	35	has glass windows and doors, with ceiling fans.
	36	There is a CD player in the room too. The room is
	37	not sound-proof but there do not seem to be other
	38	classrooms that nearby. The art room seems to be
	39	in a block of its own.
	40	
	41	The content for the lesson is on horror stories and
	42	is a continuation from the week before. The title for
	43	unit 1 for semester 1 is 'Shaping Role'. After the
	44	students come in and sit in a circle, Sandra intro-
	45	duces me to the class and they all greet me in
The students don't seem to	46	unison. Before that, the boys look at me as they
feel intimidated by me.	47	come in, surprised to see me there but they do not
	48	stare and soon 'forget' that I am there and I don't

	1	seem to affect them.
	2	
A standard structure to the	3	Jenny starts by telling the class what they will be
lessons that the boys are	4	doing for the lesson today and then starts an exer-
familiar with.	5	cise she calls 'checking in'. She asks what are the
	6	rules of 'checking in' to re-cap and hands go up.
	7	Basically, the aim of the exercise is to focus the
	8	students on the drama lesson and what they are
	9	going to do today; related to the content. Today's
	10	exercise requires them to individually share with
	11	the class the scariest thing that has happened to
	12	them. Most of the class shares a tale and most of
	13	them are funny on hindsight and the boys laugh at
	14	each other's stories. Those that do not want to share
	15	or can't think of an incident are passed on. Some of
	16	the boys take great delight in sharing and some
	17	even volunteer to tell another tale when the round
	18	is up. I notice that most of them are confident when
	19	sharing, are audible and are coherent and some even
	20	animated.
	21	
Another method Jenny	22	The discipline of the class is quite good. Jenny
uses is "Stop, Look,	23	is firm with them and does not hesitate to point
Listen" to get the boys'	24	out those who are disruptive and warns them. There
attention.	25	are a few students who are 'naughtier' and one boy
	26	in particular always gets warned but other than that,
	27	the rest of the class is pretty attentive and well-
	28	behaved. Jenny's style of discipline is to treat
	29	them as adults first and even calls them Mr. So-and
	30	so and gentlemen. However, when that does not
	31	work, she then warns them like their age - children.
	32	
	33	The second part of the lesson sees Jenny recoun-
	34	ting the lesson the previous week by asking the
	35	boys questions about the story that was told to
	36	them. Through this, the facts of the story are remem-
Students are enthusiastic and	37	bered. The boys willingly put up their hands to ans-
participative.	38	wer her questions and Jenny will choose whom to
	39	answer. The boys have done pieces of written work
	40	the previous week in groups relating to the story -
actually more of a	41	epithets the character in the story saw on a grave-
warning than an	42	stone. Jenny then gave instructions that she
ephithet.	43	wanted the boys in their groups to present the scene
	44	whereby the character saw the gravestone and the
	45	epithet on it, and to read out what they had written.
	46	She mentions that they could use freeze frames,
	47	spoken action, repetition, whisper, etc. in their
	48	presentation. The boys were obviously familiar

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	1	with these dramatic conventions. Jenny then reads out
	2	the various ephitets which she has kept from the
Visual art and language built	3	week before. They are decorated as well, and I
into the lessons.	4	realise come in rhyming lines of 4. The various groups
	5	then come forward to collect their ephitets to work
	6	on.
	7	
Jenny herself is familiar and	8	Jenny reiterates that they are to present the scene
comfortable with dramatic	9	whereby the character sees the gravestone and the
conventions and language and	10	ephitet and the grave opens. Basically, the
uses it in her classroom.	11	ephithet contains a warning and the character dis-
	12	obeys it, thus opening up the grave. She reminds
	13	them that the atmosphere will be spooky and mys-
	14	terious. She also uses the term **'Forming'** to des-
	15	cribe the exercise and asks them what this term
	16	means. The students say, "getting ready".
	17	
The students are familiar with	18	What follows next is healthy noise in the classroom
group work and most group	19	as the boys discuss among themselves and rehearse
dynamics are ok to good.	20	how they are going to present the scene. Each
	21	group takes a section of the room, with one group
	22	going outside because of **the lack of space**. They
	23	work in groups of about 4 - 5. All the students are
	24	engaged in this forming exercise and there are some
	25	obvious leaders or directors in some of the groups.
	26	
	27	Jenny then comes to talk to me to let me know
	28	what she's doing and just to make sure I'm following
	29	the class. She mentions that she likes to give the
	30	boys opportunity to 'play' and work together 'coz
	31	she feels they are often behind desks the whole
	32	day in this school. She also does not like to give
	33	comments or interfere in this forming process,
	34	preferring to give her feedback after the presentations
	35	take place. However, she does go round to the
	36	various groups to make sure they are on-track, and
	37	I notice her giving advice to some of the groups or
	38	tips.
	39	
	40	The fourth part of the lesson is the **Presenting** part
	41	and again Jenny asks the students what the term
	42	presenting' means. They reply, "showing". The
	43	students sit in a group at the front of the classroom
	44	facing the back, thus creating the performance/
Introduction to drama as	45	audience space. Jenny plays music to create the
theatre.	46	atmosphere of the cemetry and says that the
	47	following week she will bring in props for the boys
	48	to use for their presentations. She asks them to

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	1	describe the music and what kind of actions and
	2	mood would be appropriate for the presentations.
	3	ex. would their actions be slow or quick? She
Students are used to the idea	4	terms this layering their presentations. Jenny asks
of presenting and like it. They	5	who wants to go first and a few groups want to. So
are generally confident.	6	she has to choose and dictate the order. She tells
	7	them not to clap so as to not break the mood of the
	8	presentations, and reminds them to freeze at the
	9	end of their presentation.
	10	
	11	The students are obviously familiar with this presen-
	12	tation mode and audience mode and more or less
	13	display good audience behaviour, although some
	14	of them talk during the presentations. The boys are
	15	all confident when presenting although the presentations
	16	are of different standards. Some of them are interes-
	17	ting and more creative in the use of props and body
	18	movement. Some of the boys are more expressive
	19	than the rest and more into their character while
	20	others are not totally in role and laugh a bit. Some
	21	students even improvised lines from the ephitet and
	22	one group even had lip-synching! After the presentation,
	23	one boy actually came up to me to ask me whether
	24	I liked his group's act. :)
	25	
Jenny always involves the	26	The next part and last part of the lesson was the de-
students; work as co-artists.	27	brief and what should have been the **'responding'**
Although the lesson is teacher-	28	section but the class had **run out of time**. Jenny told
directed, it is not teacher-	29	them that they would respond to the presentations
focused.	30	next week and she would give her feedback then
	31	too - what worked and what didn't. She then said that
	32	they would re-hearse the scenes and this time with
	33	props. The lesson ended off with Jenny making an
Arts exposure and across	34	announcement that they were going to watch a perf.
disciplines.	35	next Tuesday from QAC - Phat (contemp. Dance)
	36	to which the students got excited. They were
	37	basically reminded of how they should behave, and
	38	that audience participation was possible. They were
	39	also to do a writing exercise based on the performance.
	40	And this was to be assessed for their report card.
	41	
	42	The class was then dismissed for morning tea.
	43	
	44	
	45	
	46	
	47	
	48	

Log. No. 4 - 6 April 2001
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	1	I went to All Saints College with my supervisor
	2	yesterday to observe a Year 11 drama class
	3	conducted by one of my supervisor's former students,
	4	Karen. The class was scheduled for 11.20 am.
	5	
	6	The College is situated in a nice suburban area and is
	7	quite vast. It has lovely big grounds with lots of nature
	8	and space to walk. The College consists of various
	9	building located not too near each other, and are made
	10	of brick and are low-rise. The impression I get of the
	11	students here are they are polite and well-
	12	mannered. They look at you and smile while
	13	walking past and appear friendly too.
	14	There is also a huge chapel which probably
	a	also doubles up as the hall on the school
	b	grounds.
	15	
to find out exactly what	16	The classroom we went to was a drama rehear-
resources and	17	sal room. It seemed that they had a wing of rooms
infrastructure for drama.	18	for this purpose. The room was the size of a
	19	double classroom (S'pore standards) and was
	20	carpeted. It had a CD player, a drawer cabinet
	21	to store materials, and furniture such as a table
	22	and chairs. There were also boards on the wall
	23	to put material up and a white board to write on.
	24	Furthermore, the boards were filled with material
	25	on various theatre productions being staged in
	26	Queensland, and other related drama articles.
	27	The room had been set-up and prepared by Karen
	28	for the lesson.
	29	
teacher has good rapport	30	As we entered the classroom, Karen was there to
with the students and has	31	greet us. She was mingling with students from
a warm and friendly,	32	her previous class who were waiting for the bell.
approachable disposition.	33	The students were informal with her and were
	34	also listening to music from the radio. After being
	35	introduced and while waiting for the next class
	36	to come in, Karen and I had a quick chat. I found
	37	out that she has been teaching for 10 years; 5
what kind of admin. Duties does	38	at this College. She is also the HOD for drama.
she have?	39	She mentioned that she liked this particular
	40	module that we were observing - the Extended
	41	Artist because it employed process drama. She
	42	then mentioned that the class we were observing
	43	was rather small in size - 13, and had few boys
	44	(only 2). She had not seen them for a week

	1	because of exams which were what the students
	2	were coming from. A lot of them have had no
	3	prior experience with drama, with only some having
	4	done drama since Year 8. She also said that
	5	they were a rather homogeneous group and not
	6	one of her best classes. After the lesson Karen also
	7	revealed that a lot of the girls were boarders at
	8	the College too and so actually shared quite a lot
	9	in common. (The College is also a boarding sch.)
	10	
	11	The students for the class starting coming and
	12	Karen met them outside the classroom. One of the
	13	students took Karen's hand to have a closer look at
	14	her ring. As the students assembled, Karen briefed
	15	them on our visit, and what she was going to do
	16	in the lesson. She also told them to take off their shoes,
	17	and that all they needed was a pen.
	18	
Karen is prepared for the	19	Thus began the lesson. Karen started with a relax-
lesson. It is all in her head.	a	ation exercise and played folksy music. She
She is confident and clear	20	asked the students to lie down and close their
in her teaching.	21	eyes and then narrated what the students should be
	22	thinking. The lights were turned off for this. From
	23	getting the students to think about themselves
	24	in the real world, Karen then proceeded to get them
	25	to think about the lyrics of the song, and finally
	26	the context of the role-play: the Vietnam War.
	27	The students were often told to think about how
	28	they were feeling too in the belief building process.
	29	The students were familiar with the context
	30	because it was work they had been working on.
	31	As Karen is setting up the context, she also goes
	32	round giving out envelopes with letters inside;
	33	placing them beside the students. As the cont-
	34	ext shifts more and more into role - the Vietnam
	35	War and the students are made to imagine they
	36	are on the battle-field, so too does the music
	37	change to suit the mood.
	38	
	39	At some points the music was a bit too soft and
	40	I wondered if the students at the far end could
	41	actually hear? Also, some of the students were
	42	fidgetting during the exercise. I felt that the
	43	belief building exercise was average. I don't think
	44	the students were fully into role at the end of it.
	45	Was also wondering why no warm-ups were done
	46	before the class, like exercises to get them
	47	focused on drama?

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The process drama	1	Karen then proceeded to enter into role as an army
exercise is based on a	2	captain of sorts and told the students who were soldiers
text the students are	3	to write a letter home to their parents. She then collected
already familiar with.	4	the letters and put them in the top cabinet drawer.
	5	
	6	Karen then came out of role and changed the
	7	context to a dance between 2 characters in the
	8	play-text. Students were paired up and starting
	9	dancing. Each pair were to share their thoughts
	10	about the particular situation set-up in role as
	11	they were tapped by Karen. Ater each pair had their
	12	turn, the context was changed again.
	13	
	14	This time, the context was one of the character's
	15	room - Roy. A girl from the class had been
	16	selected earlier to be the protaganist in the scene.
	17	The rest of the students formed the wall of the
very detailed organization	18	room, sitting in a square with an entrance space
and planning seen in the	19	as the door. Karen briefs 'the wall' on what they need
set-up.	20	to do. Karen has set this room up before the lesson
	21	to have a table, chair and objects belonging to
	22	Roy on the table - photo in frame, book with
	23	pictures from the war, a lockett, etc. The prota-
	24	ganist explores these objects while Karen narrates
	25	this to the wall as the protagonist's back is to them.
	26	There is then letter-reading involved, both as a
	27	wall and singularly. These letters consisted of
	28	some that were written by the students in the
	29	first execise, and a letter written by Karen in role
	30	prepared for the class. Her letter served to deepen
	31	the drama by introducing new facts.
	32	
Students are familiar with	33	The students were then told to form a conscience
conventions for process	34	alley and the protagonist was made to walk through it.
drama.	35	A male students was chosen to be Roy who met
	36	the protagonist at the end of the alley. They then did a
	37	role play.
	38	
	39	The students were then told to break out of role
Karen's evaluation a strong	40	and sit in a circle to evaluate the lesson with Karen.
component.	41	They evaluated what happened and also **their**
	42	**feelings**. The students were also drawn back to
	43	consider the script/play. Karen explained that she
	44	wanted to continue the drama where they left
	45	off because she felt that there was a lot of
	46	potential for development. However, **time again**
Karen called it 'the tyranny	47	**was against them** and so they could only
of time'.	48	evaluate the situation instead of play it out.

	1	From the responses the students gave during
Karen is encouraging and	2	the evaluation, it seemed that they did get
positive.	3	learning opportunities out of the lesson and Karen
	4	seemed pleased with their replies. To end the
	5	lesson on a happier note since the context
	6	explored was depressing, she then asked the
	7	students to say something nice about the person
	8	sitting on their right before dismissing them.
	9	
shows teacher is open to	10	After the lesson, Karen asked whether we needed
feedback; in fact, seeks it	11	to meet with her to clarify anything. We both told
and it also open to	12	her there was no need to. Karen also asked my supervisor
supporting research in the	13	what she thought of the lesson to which she
area, allowing growth and	14	replied very positively. Karen offered me the oppor-
progress.	15	tunity to keep in touch if I needed anything,
	16	something she did at the beginning of the lesson
	17	too. We then thanked her and left.
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